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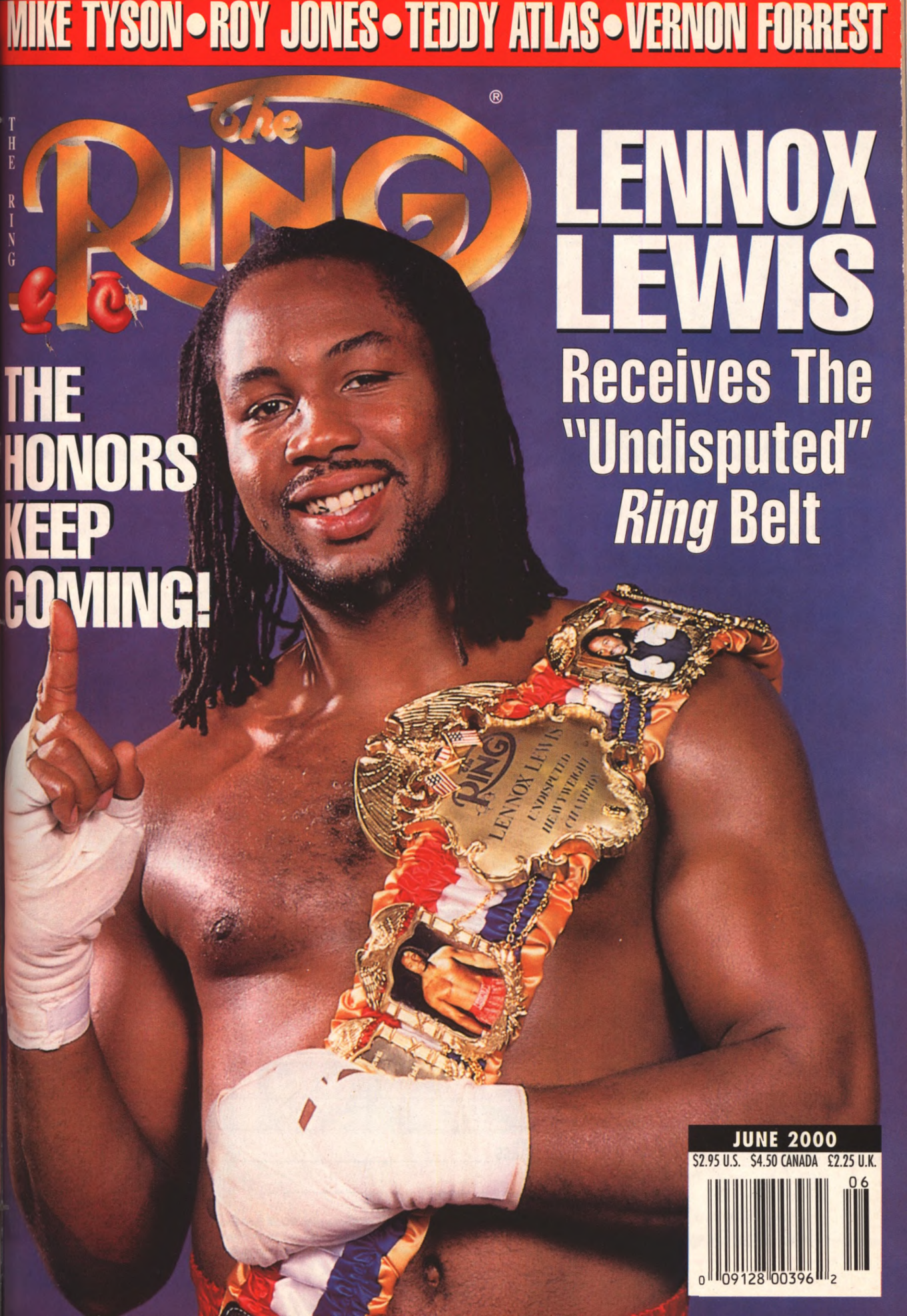
LENNOX LEWIS

Receives The "Undisputed" *Ring* Belt

THE HONORS KEEP COMING!



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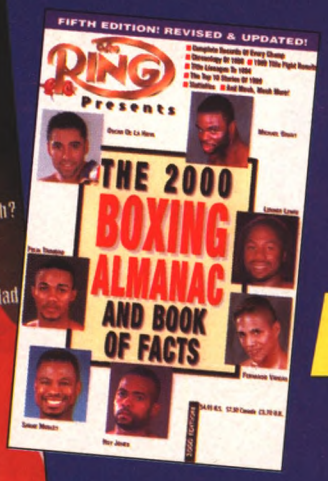

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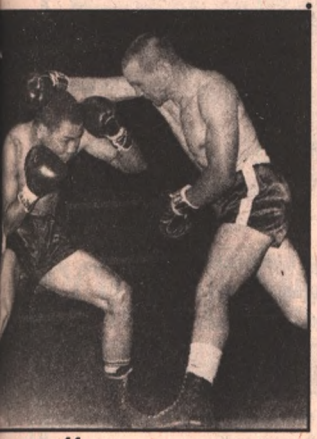

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RINGSIDE

By the time you read this, the trial of President Bob Lee and three other IBF officials indicted on racketeering charges will either be underway or already over. Writing this in mid-February, I obviously have no idea what the outcome of the trial will be, but judging by the recently unsealed evidence, it's beginning to look like a slam dunk for the feds.

Part of the newly revealed evidence are transcripts of taped conversations between Lee and former IBF ratings chairman Doug Beavers, who was admittedly deeply involved in rigging the rankings for cash until he turned informant in order to save his own hide. Many of those accused of making payoffs are among the sport's biggest promoters—Bob Arum, Don King, Cedric Kushner, and Dino Duva. Maybe the federal prosecutor has plans to indict all four of them, or maybe, as has often been rumored, the individual the government is really out to get is King. What has me worried is that some guilty parties will escape unscathed, while others will feel the full brunt of Uncle Sam's wrath, and anything short of equal justice will ultimately tarnish the federal government's attempt to clean up the sport.

Perhaps the most controversial scenario would be if Lee and King ultimately turn out to be the only major figures to go down. Do you think the fact that they are both African-American will go unnoticed? Our criminal justice system has a long, sad history of racism (just ask Hurricane Carter), and the only way the government can be truly successful in this case is if some white folks are also charged and convicted. God knows there are plenty of them involved, and I'm not just talking about William Brennan, a Caucasian member of the IBF also under indictment.

It takes two to consummate a bribe, and the way I figure it, if nobody had given Lee and his co-defendants any money, boxing would not have been so deeply wounded. When asked about the $25,000 Main Events claims to have paid Lee to secure a number-one rating for now-IBF junior middleweight champion Fernando Vargas, Kathy Duva told the Associated Press, "There's a difference between bribery and extortion." She right, but why didn't Duva and all the others accused of paying bribes inform the proper authorities that they were being shaken down? To me, the answer is self-evident: Although they may not have liked the scam the IBF has been accused of running, they decided to play along because it was good for business. And as far as I'm concerned, that makes them just as culpable.

If Lee and company are proven guilty as charged, in my eyes, those who helped them perpetuate the fraud are equally as guilty. They all played a role in dishonoring and corrupting the sport in which they earn their daily bread, and the industry, the fighters, and the fans will be far better off without them. If I had my way, everybody who either gave or took a bribe to rig ratings would be punished to the full extent of the law. And I mean everybody.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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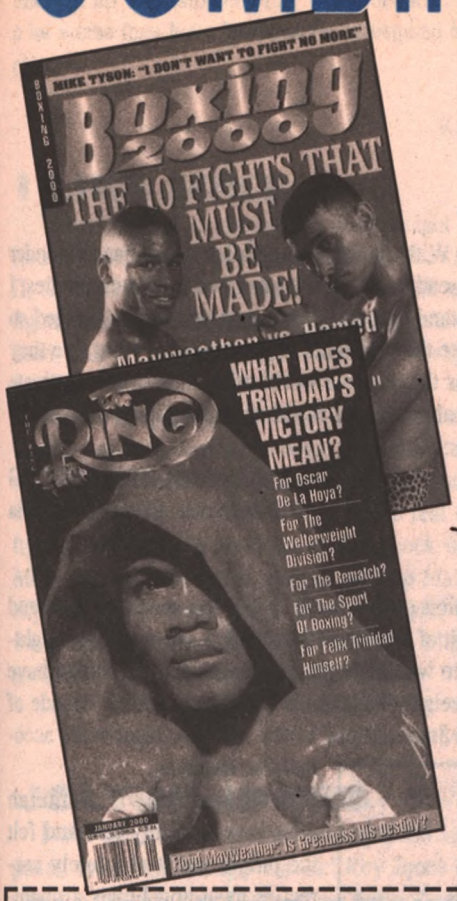

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COME OUT WRITING

We welcome your letters, which may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. The opinions expressed by our readers in their letters to the editor are not necessarily the opinions of THE RING or its publisher. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

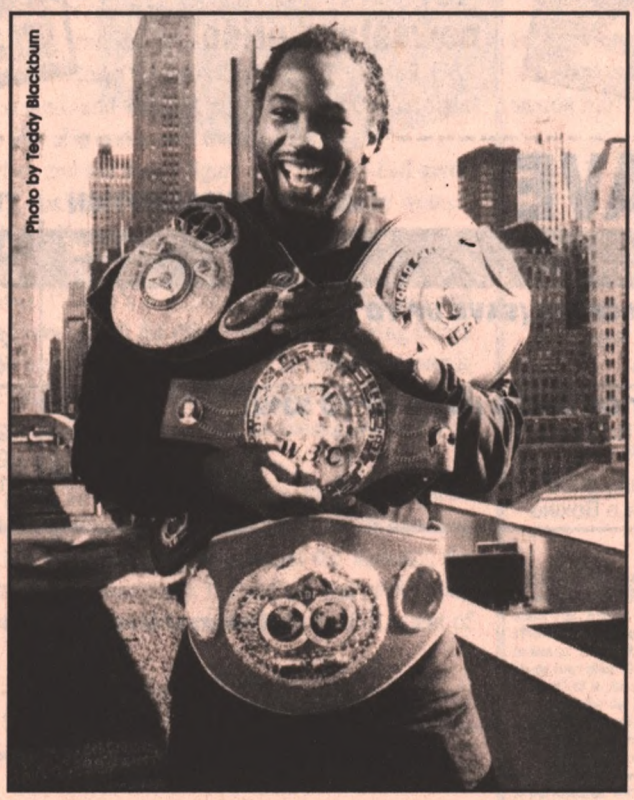
ALPHABET CLEANUP

This is an open letter to either the WBA or WBC. With the IBF being indicted, one has to wonder about their ratings system (as if we didn't wonder already). But to the other two governing bodies, I encourage at least one of the two organizations to stand up and fix the sport you have damaged so much. If one of these organizations would simply rate the best fighters, regardless of what title they now hold, this organization would soon be known as the one true world title. They could eliminate the competition faster than an Ali shuffle, and we could have one world champion and worthy number-one contenders.

ADAM SCHELLENBERG
Vancouver, British Columbia

KING LENNOX

Lennox Lewis—undisputed heavyweight champion of the world. I like the sound of that, and given the fact that Lewis toiled for 10 years in pursuit of all three major belts, I, for one, am delighted he has finally achieved his goal. That Lewis had to wait eight months longer than he should have to be officially recognized as the undisputed heavyweight champion is a disgrace. After a decade of being ignored by the media, especially in the United States, I hope Lewis will now receive the accolades he deserves.



Lennox Lewis finally reigns over the heavyweight division—and deserves it, says delighted reader Neale Harvey from Australia. Harvey's only concern is whether Lewis will receive the accolades from the American media that have been long overdue.

I enjoyed Lewis' rematch with Evander Holyfield and felt the judges got it absolutely correct in awarding Lewis a unanimous decision. But after watching the fight and listening to the commentators doing the Australian broadcast, I could have sworn I had just watched Evander Holyfield fight Evander Holyfield. Although he was busier than in the first fight, Holyfield experienced virtually the same problems he had against Lewis at Madison Square Garden eight months earlier. Lewis' superior height and strength again posed enormous problems for Holyfield, but after seven rounds, the commentators had Holyfield ahead. Holyfield showed great character to make the fight what it was, but he didn't win.

For someone who has been beaten just once in 37 professional fights, Lewis has not

received much respect or regard from the so-called experts. Since becoming the undisputed world champion, the knock already on Lewis is that he doesn't possess enough charisma.

I saw Lewis' performance as a major victory for boxing, because I'd much rather pay $50 to watch him on pay-per-view than put up with another Mike Tyson debacle. The sport could do a lot worse than have Lewis as its undisputed heavyweight champion.

NEALE HARVEY
Kalgoorlie, Australia

I LIKE MIKE

These days, it seems that the heavyweight division could use some old-fashioned excitement. Holyfield-Lewis, Holyfield-Lewis II, Grant-Golota, and Botha-Briggs were all examples of boring fights. The public builds up its anticipation and enthusiasm beforehand, only to be disappointed when the overhyped event unveils itself.

We are all quick to jump on the bandwagon and criticize Mike Tyson. I agree he has made some mistakes both in and out of the ring that have marred his character, but, let's face it—Mike Tyson was exciting. He was a throwback to the real champions, hungry fighters who knew how to set up and knock out their opponents. Mike worked hard in the gym to develop his fine tuned skill of slipping punches and firing quick, powerful counterpunches. It was a real treat to watch Mike Tyson fight. Mike, I hope you stick around.

MIKE DiFLORIO
Mississauga, Ontario

JOLTIN' JONES

I was disturbed to see the January 2000 issue of THE RING's pound-for-pound ratings that had Roy Jones in the number-one spot. To me, that doesn't make any sense. Oscar De La Hoya and Felix Trinidad were fighting for the pound-for-pound title in September, and we should have figured out who the best fighter was, even though the fight fell way short of its hype. They were still the best fighters going at it, one-on-one, and that should have determined the case. But when I looked at your January issue, Roy was on the top of the mountain, where I don't think he belongs. Yes, Roy is a great fighter. The way he fights is amazing, but if Oscar and Tito were fighting nobodies, they would look great, too. They are real fighters who fight real fights.

People say Jones is the best because he's the undisputed light heavyweight champion. I have proof that says otherwise. Jones has continued to duck Dariusz Michalczewski, who vacated the titles Jones fought average fighters to get. When he fights good fighters (someone like Michalczewski), like Oscar and Tito do, then I'll come around and acknowledge Roy Jones as the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world today. For now, I just see Jones as a pretender to the throne.

JOSE IBARRA
Watsonville, CA

SOUR ON SHEIKA

I would like to comment on the article about Omar Sheika ("Knockout Artist Omar Sheika Decides ... No More Decisions!" October 1999) in which Sheika claims he deserved the decision over Tony Booth in their July '98 fight in England. I saw the fight, and it was close, but Booth definitely won it. Sheika did not look good in the Booth fight, nor did he when he fought Paul Wesley over here. All of our top super middleweights—Joe Calzaghe, Robin Reid, Glenn Catley, Dean Francis—could beat Sheika.

PETER BRANKSOME
Essex, England

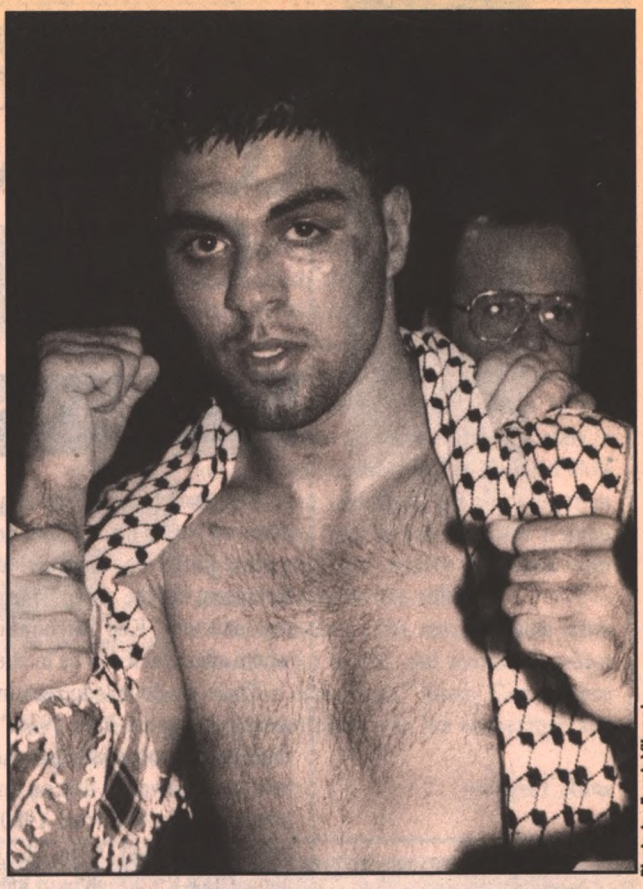


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Omar Sheika says he was robbed in his points loss to Tony Booth, but English reader Peter Banksome disagrees. In fact, Banksome thinks there are plenty of super middles in England who could beat Sheika.

CHICKEN CHO

I have been a fan of former WBC super flyweight champion Gerry Penalosa ever since he turned pro in 1989, and it baffles me to no end how an excellent boxer like him could lose twice to a lousy fighter like In Joo Cho. I am sure that any self-respecting fan who saw the Cho-Penalosa rematch on January 2 was irked by Cho's cowardly act of evading combat by running like a panic-stricken chicken away from a butcher's knife. If there had been no ropes around the ring, the South Korean might have jumped out and sought cover among the audience.

I think it's about time that boxing rules make a clear distinction between circling as an offensive or defensive strategy and running as an indication of being unwilling to fight. Otherwise, world titles will continue to fall into the hands of cunning cowards whose mere presence in the ring is an insult to the sport of boxing.

BUTCH Z. BERTILLO
Albay, Philippines ■

ROUND ONE

CANASTOTA'S CLASS OF 2000

Ten years after its first induction weekend, the International Boxing Hall of Fame will open its doors on June 11 to a dozen new honorees. Naturally, this year's class is not nearly as star-studded as that initial one that included names like Ali, Armstrong, Dempsey, Louis, Marciano, and Robinson, but the group being enshrined still packs quite a legendary punch. Included are four living inductees, **Ken Buchanan**, **Jeff Chandler**, **Carl "Bobo" Olson**, and **Tito Lectoure**, all of whom are expected to be in attendance for Hall of Fame Weekend in Canastota, New York.

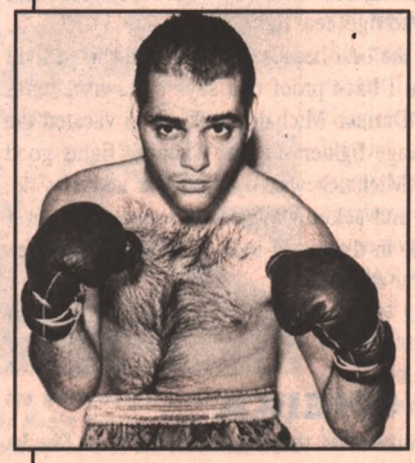
There are four inductees in the Modern category: Buchanan, 62-8 (28), who reigned as lightweight champion from 1970-'72 (though the Scotsman is unfortunately best remembered for the night he controversially lost the title to Roberto Duran); the late **Jimmy Carter**, 81-30-9 (31), who held the lightweight title on three occasions in the '50s; Chandler, 33-2-2 (18), who held the WBA bantamweight belt from 1980-'84 and is generally regarded as the best African-American 118-pounder ever; and Olson, 98-16-2 (48), who wore the middleweight crown from 1953-'55 and was named THE RING Fighter of the Year in '53.

There are also four inductees in the Old-Timers category: former bantamweight champion **Jimmy Barry**, former light heavyweight king **Battling Levinsky**, top lightweight contender **Billy Petrolle**, and former lightweight champ **Ad Wolgast**. Bare-knuckle era lightweight **Arthur Chambers** is this year's only honoree in the Pioneer category, while the Non-Participants being enshrined include Argentinian promoter Lectoure, European promoter **Jeff Dickson**, and **Dan Morgan**, the manager of fellow inductee Levinsky, among others.

For more information regarding the June 8-11 Hall of Fame Weekend, contact the IBHOF at (315) 697-7095, or check out the Hall of Fame's official Web site at www.IBHOF.com.

—Eric Raskin

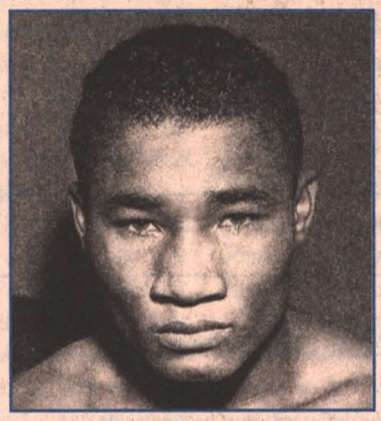
Jeff Chandler



Carl "Bobo" Olson

BEAU JACK, 1921-2000

Two-time former lightweight champion Beau Jack, the central character in one of boxing's most famous rags-to-riches-to-rags stories, died of Parkinson's disease on February 2 in Miami, Florida, at age 78. Jack, born Sidney Walker, in Augusta, Georgia, was one of the most popular fighters in history, thanks to his swarming, all-action style and cheerful personality. He fought 21 main events at Madison Square Garden, an all-time record.



Jack: Hall of Fame lightweight champ dies

Jack won the then-prestigious New York State version of the lightweight title by knocking out Tippy Larkin on December 18, 1942. He lost the crown to arch-rival Bob Montgomery in May '43, but regained the title on November 19 of the same year. Jack lost the title back to Montgomery in March '44, but evened their celebrated series by winning a 10-round non-title bout in August. That was the famous War Bond charity fight that drew an all-time record gate of $35,864,900 at MSG. All Jack and Montgomery received was $2,500 each for training expenses.

Other great fighters Jack beat were Fritzie Zivic, Henry Armstrong, Sammy Angott, and Lew Jenkins—all of whom have been inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame, as was Jack in 1991. He was THE RING's Fighter of the Year in '44.

Despite total purses in excess of a million dollars, shortly after his final bout, a knockout loss to Ike Williams on August 12, 1955, Jack was back living in the two-room shack where he was born. He later moved to Miami, where he shined shoes at the Fountainebleau and Doral Beach Hotels, a job he'd held at the Augusta National Golf Club before launching his pro career in 1940. From time to time, he also trained fighters, and was briefly affiliated with Aaron Pryor in the late-1980s.

Jack, 83-24-5 (40), never became bitter about his lot in life, and remained upbeat until the end. "Better fighters quit to him," Jimmy Cannon once wrote of Jack. "He frightened them with his exuberance and relentless gladness to suffer."

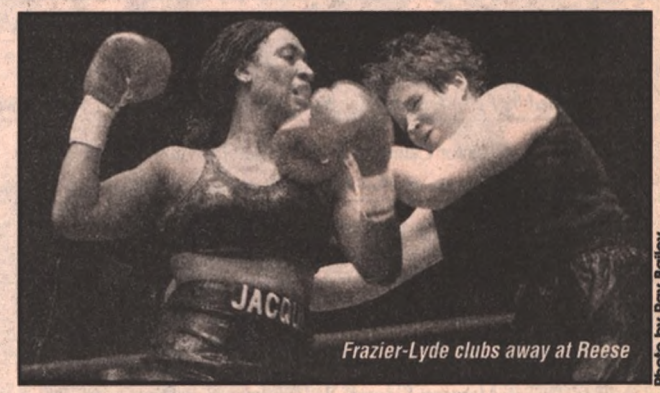
—Nigel Collins

GENERATION GAP

On February 11, ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* televised an all-female boxing card in which everything good and noble about women's boxing was on display. All of the fighters came to win, most of them were skilled, and the matchups were all competitive. On this night, women's boxing was not a sideshow. It was a sport.

But you hardly heard a peep about it in the press afterward. The same cannot be said for the heavily hyped professional debut of Jacqui Frazier-Lyde, the daughter of former heavyweight champ Joe Frazier, five days earlier in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Frazier-Lyde met the more experienced (well, she did have one fight, a knockout loss, under her belt) Teela Reese in a bout in which only one of the fighters came to win, neither of them showed much in the way of skill, and using the word "competitive" would be showing a blatant inability to grasp the English language. Yes, Frazier-Lyde won convincingly and pocketed a cool $25,000. But this was by no means a victory for women's boxing, or for Frazier in her bid to show superiority over Laila Ali, the youngest daughter of Smokin' Joe's rival, Muhammad Ali.

Laila, of course, is the reason Frazier-Lyde took up boxing in the first place, providing an opportunity for the 38-year-old lawyer to even the score in the Ali-Frazier family feud. But against Reese, Frazier-Lyde gave observers little reason to believe she'll be successful against the athletic, 21-year-old Ali. Weighing 176 pounds (about 15 less than when she started training last October, but still a few above her ideal fighting weight), Frazier-Lyde caught the hapless Reese with a short left hand just seven seconds into the bout, causing her to close her eyes and turn her back. "Sister Smoke" proceeded to hammer away with some of the most technically unappetizing powershots ever seen in a boxing ring, but they were enough to force referee Gary Rosatto to step in at 83 seconds of the first round.



Frazier-Lyde clubs away at Reese

Photo by Ray Bailey

"I'm going to kick Laila's butt," Frazier-Lyde said afterward. "That's what Frazier's do. We kick Ali butt."

In all fairness, Frazier-Lyde debuted after just four months in the gym, so there's reasonable hope that she will improve as she gets a little more experience. Ali, 3-0 (3), is a work in progress as well, and it doesn't look like the two will meet until October—the month that marks the 25th anniversary of "The Thrilla In Manila." Where there's Smoke, there's money, and though Ali has thus far ignored the challenges of Frazier-Lyde, the financial opportunity dictates that these two are on a collision course. Let's just hope, for the sake of those who take women's boxing seriously, that it doesn't turn into a trilogy.

—Eric Raskin

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
1-28-00	Alex Bunema W 10 J.C. Candello	ESPN2	jm	C	B+	C
Bunema gets close nod after thrilling 10th round makes up for awful nine that preceded it						
1-28-00	Clifford Etienne KO 1 Marvin Hunt	ESPN2	h	C-	D+	C-
Etienne too big, too fast, too strong for willing but outgunned Hunt						
1-28-00	Chuck Mince KO 3 Chalon Bechnel	ESPN2	jm	D+	B+	C+
Anyone remember the last time a Lou Duva fighter lost a four-rounder?						
1-28-00	Syd Vanderpool W 10 Glen Johnson	ESPN2	sm	B-	B	B-
If you haven't seen Vanderpool yet, don't worry; you will						
1-29-00	Joe Calzaghe W 12 David Starie	Show	sm	B+	C+	D-
How bad was this? Freddie Norwood called Calzaghe afterward and thanked him						
1-29-00	Mike Tyson KO 2 Julius Francis	Show	h	A	D-	C+
Tyson finally gets an easy one; a couple more and the drums will start beating again						
2-4-00	Israel Vazquez W 10 Hector Velazquez	ESPN2	jf	C	A	B
Vazquez scores last-round knockdown, takes decision in good, hard-fought scrap						
2-4-00	Julio Diaz W 4 Jose Manjarrez	ESPN2	l	C-	B+	C
He doesn't hit as hard as his brother, but this Diaz sure can box						
2-4-00	Antonio Diaz KO 8 James Crayton	ESPN2	jw	B+	C+	B
Diaz ends competitive match with right-hand bomb, awaits title shot						
2-6-00	Santiago Samaniego W 6 Freddy Cruz	FOXSN	jm	C-	D+	C+
Samaniego rebounds from loss to Vernon Forrest with solid decision win						
2-6-00	Fres Oquendo W 10 Dale Crowe	FOXSN	h	C+	B+	C
Now trained by Felix Trinidad Sr., hopeful Oquendo boxes way to clear win						
2-6-00	Hector Camacho Jr. KO 1 Harold Warren	FOXSN	jw	B-	C+	B
Junior may never throw another right hook as perfect as the one Warren walked into						
2-11-00	Marischa Sjiaw W 10 Zulfia Koutdussova	ESPN2	l	D+	B-	C+
Koutdussova deserves nod, but goes home to Russia with a loss						
2-11-00	Trina Ortegon W 10 Kendra Lockhart	ESPN2	sm	D	C	C
You can laugh if you like, but we'll bet Ortegon hits harder than Bruno Girard does						
2-11-00	Margaret Sidoroff W 10 Jolene Blackshear	ESPN2	fl	C+	A	B
Anyone who thinks women can't fight should get a tape of this one						
2-12-00	**Zab Judah KO 4 Jan Bergman**	**Show**	**IBF jw**	**A**	**C**	**B+**
Hey, Zab, that giant villain from the James Bond movies called—he wants his teeth back						
2-12-00	**Kostya Tszyu KO 8 Ahmed Santos**	**Show**	**WBC jw**	**A**	**C-**	**B**
Is it just us, or is every Tszyu fight starting to look the same?						
2-12-00	**Vassiliy Jirov KO 9 Saul Montana**	**Uni**	**IBF c**	**A-**	**B+**	**A-**
An exciting cruiserweight champ? What's next, the IBF taking bribes?						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN–Fox SportsNet; Uni–Univision

TROUBLE FOR "TOO SHARP"

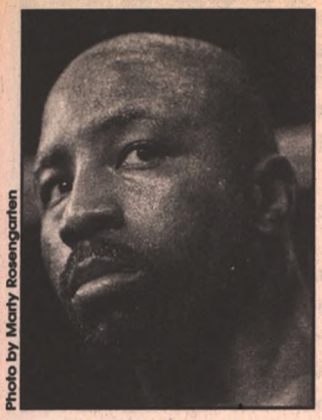


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Johnson: Junior bantam champ behind bars

IBF junior bantamweight champion Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson, widely considered one of the best fighters in the world, has been sentenced to up to one year in federal prison for probation violation. Johnson was arrested October 30, 1999, for assaulting his wife in their Fort Washington, Maryland, home.

District Court of Maryland documents obtained by the *Washington Post* report Johnson, 28, punched his wife Samantha in the face and broke her jaw. Samantha Johnson left the house and called police, who responded and arrested the champion. Two marijuana cigarettes were found in his pants pockets, according to police.

Johnson had been on probation—due to end this year—for a 1995 conviction for possession of cocaine. In September '93, Johnson was arrested and charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine, briefly spending time in jail.

Despite the arrest just three weeks prior, Johnson, 38-1 (26) with 1 no-contest, defended the IBF title November 19 in Washington against Raul Juarez of Mexico. In the fourth round, Johnson landed a low blow, Juarez was unable to continue, and the bout was declared a no-contest.

On December 15, a U.S. District Court judge revoked Johnson's probation and ordered him to surrender. He did on January 18 and is in a federal prison in Petersburg, Virginia.

His father and trainer, Ham Johnson, declined to comment. Representatives of his promoter, Cedric Kushner, also declined comment. A trial was set for April 10.

—John Scheinman

BONE IS NO DOG

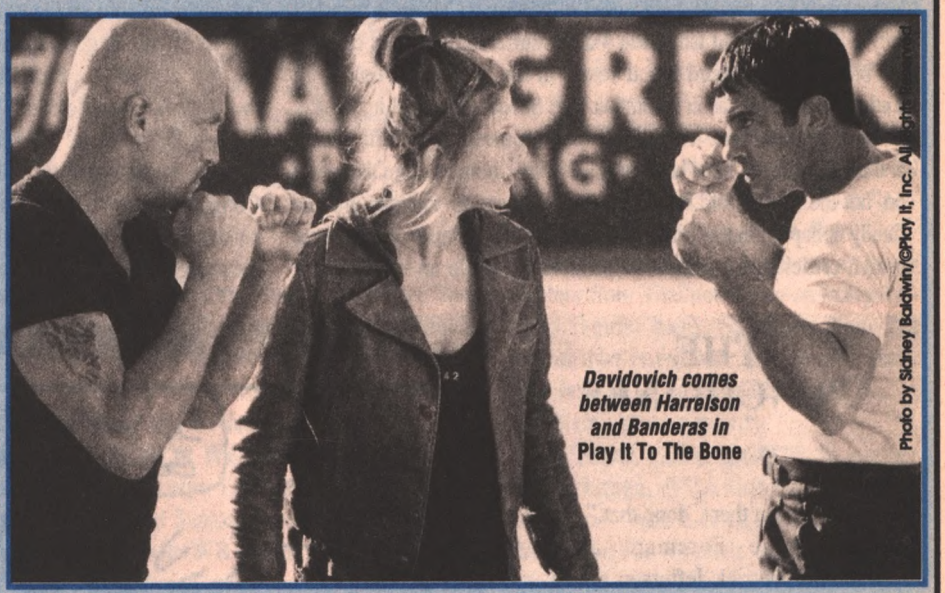


Photo by Sidney Baldwin/©Play It, Inc. All rights reserved.

Davidovich comes between Harrelson and Banderas in Play It To The Bone

Although actress Lolita Davidovich probably throws the best punch in the movie, it's Woody Harrelson and Antonio Banderas, playing a couple of down-at-the-heels pugs, who make *Play It To The Bone* an enjoyable way to spend a couple of hours. It's not high art and doesn't take on any serious social issue the way *The Hurricane* does, but if you're not offended by the X-rated dialogue, there's lots of laughs and a surprising amount of insight into fighters and the boxing industry.

Based on a true-life incident that took place under slightly different circumstances in 1965, the movie follows two buddies who accept an 11th-hour offer to fight each other in the semifinal of a Mike Tyson card in Las Vegas. Davidovich's character, who loves both boxers, agrees to drive the hapless pair from Los Angeles to Vegas, and along the way they are joined by Lucy Liu—who eventually becomes the recipient of Davidovich's haymaker.

The film is just as much a buddy-pic as it is a boxing movie, and does a commendable job of exploring Harrelson and Banderas' complex relationship. Both actors are totally convincing, and while boxers' personalities vary as much as those in any occupational group, I've met many fighters over the years who were an awful lot like the two characters that Banderas and Harrelson depict. Director/writer Ron Shelton also touches on the homoerotic and homophobic aspects of boxing, a topic that is seldom discussed, but is, nonetheless, never far below the surface of the sport.

Bone pulls no punches in portraying the sleazy side of the Sweet Science. Tom Sizemore is deliciously evil as a foul-mouthed promoter, and a puffy-looking Robert Wagner plays a smarmy casino owner to perfection.

The climactic fight scene is of the over-the-top *Rocky* variety, and the only aspect of the movie that I found unrealistic from a boxing point of view. Pretty much everything else rings true, especially the way the fighters blow a sizable portion of their purses playing blackjack before leaving Vegas and heading back to L.A.

—Nigel Collins

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Dokes: Ten-year sentence

Former WBA heavyweight champion **Michael Dokes** was sentenced to 10 years in prison in late-January after pleading guilty to attempted murder, second-degree kidnapping, and battery with intent to commit sexual assault on his live-in girlfriend in August 1998. Dokes, 41, will spend a minimum of four years two months behind bars ... Two-division former world champ **Vinny Pazienza** is also in trouble with the law, as he was accused of drunken driving and recklessly eluding police in an early-morning incident in Rhode Island in late-January. Police said Pazienza, after being pulled over, got out of his car when told not to and threw a punch at an officer ... **Mike Tyson** reached a settlement in early-February with **Sherry Cole** and **Chevelle Butts**, two women who alleged that the former heavyweight champ assaulted them at a Washington, D.C., restaurant in March '98. Cole and Butts were seeking $7.5-million in damages, but the terms of the settlement were kept confidential ... A date of May 10 has been set for IBF junior middleweight champion **Fernando Vargas'** assault trial. Vargas and four friends are accused of beating a California man last July ... Welterweight **Emiliano Valdez** suffered two blood clots on his brain and a severed blood vessel in his January 23 fight with **Teddy Reid**, and was in a coma at Bon Secours Hospital in Venice, Florida, at press time. Valdez was badly battered in the fifth round, and the fight could have been stopped at any moment from that point on, but the 26-year-old Dominican was allowed to continue until he finally collapsed in the 10th. Reid and his trainer, **Pepe Correa**, have drawn criticism for excessive celebration while an unconscious Valdez was being treated in the ring, but Reid released a statement of apology and prayer for Valdez' health the next day. Hopefully, Valdez will not become the first ring casualty of the new year, although his prognosis was not looking favorable as we went to press ... **Bobby Brown**, a Washington, D.C.-based middleweight in the 1940s and trainer of Hall of Fame light heavyweight champ **Bob Foster**, died on January 19 following a stroke. Brown, who ran D.C.'s House of Champions gym in the '40s and '50s, was 76 years old ... Former WBA super middleweight champion **Steve Little** lost his battle with colon cancer, passing away on January 30 at the age of 34. Little shocked **Michael Nunn** for the title in February '94, but lost it to **Frankie Liles** in his first defense. His career record was 25-17-3 (6). Donations to help the wife and six children Little left behind can be sent to Wanda Little, DBA Stephen K. Little, Family Fund Account, Berks County Bank, P.O. Box 1097, Reading, PA 19603 ... Our best wishes for a speedy recovery go out to **Sean O'Grady**, who suffered broken ribs and a broken collarbone in an auto accident in Florida in late-January. "The Champ" was reportedly in good spirits, making cornball jokes in the hospital the very next day ... From the tooting-our-own-horn department: In the 1999 Internet Boxing Awards, THE RING was voted "Favorite Boxing Publication." The top three runners-up were *KO*, *World Boxing*, and *Boxing 99*, all sister publications of THE RING ... Congratulations to RING contributor **John Scheinman**, who was named the top boxing journalist in the Baltimore-Washington area at the inaugural Night of Champions awards dinner in January.

Brown: 1940s middleweight dies at 76

THE PUNCHLINES

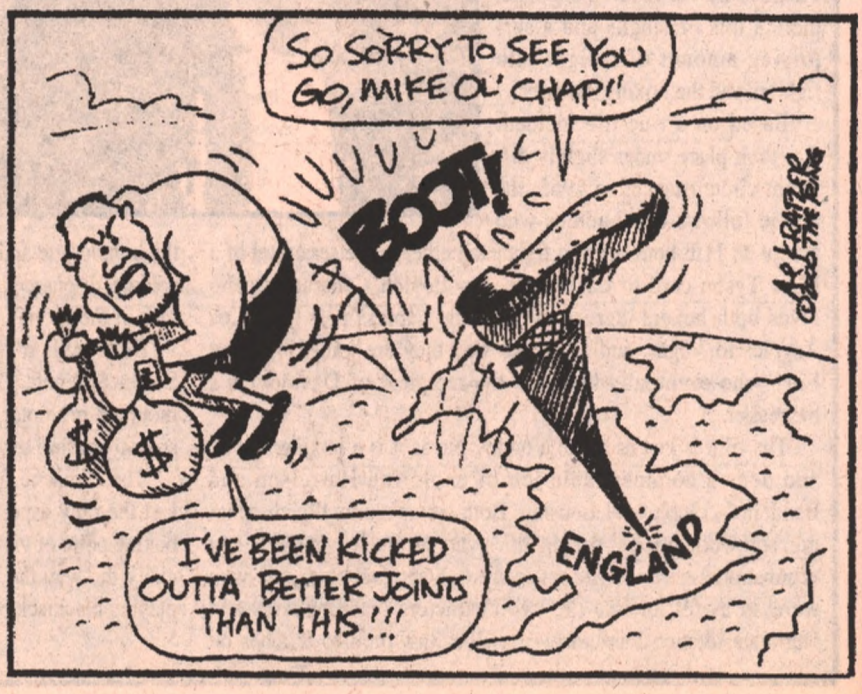
"I've been there, done that."

—George Foreman, after watching Derrick Jefferson punch himself out against David Izon

"They are just a bunch of frustrated women who want to be men."

—Mike Tyson, on the women's groups opposed to his presence in England

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended February 15, 2000)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES** Light Heavyweight
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** Junior Lightweight
3. **FELIX TRINIDAD** Welterweight
4. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Welterweight
5. **SHANE MOSLEY** Welterweight
6. **MARK JOHNSON** Junior Bantamweight
7. **RICARDO LOPEZ** Junior Flyweight
8. **ERIK MORALES** Junior Featherweight
9. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Middleweight
10. **STEVE JOHNSTON** Lightweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: IBF champion Vassiliy Jirov's ninth-round TKO of Saul Montana moved him from third to second, while Fabrice Tiozzo, who has been defending against inferior opposition compared to Jirov, slips from second to third. Montana (ninth last issue) falls to 10th, while two-time former light heavyweight titlist Virgil Hill, scheduled to challenge Tiozzo in April, enters at number nine.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Joe Calzaghe (second last issue) drops to third after his insipid 12-round decision over David Starie. The Welshman might have fallen farther if the rest of the division wasn't so lackluster. WBA boss Byron Mitchell (third last issue) takes over the second position.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Otis Grant (sixth last issue) is still recovering from a serious auto accident, and hasn't fought since November 1998. He's been dropped from the ratings. Everybody below moves up one notch, and Rito Ruvalcaba debuts at number 10.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Pernell Whitaker (fifth last issue) hasn't fought since February '99, and has been dropped for inactivity. Vernon Forrest, Oba Carr, Jose Luis Lopez, Shannon Taylor, and Wilfredo Rivera all move up one spot due to Whitaker's exit, which also made room at number 10 for Ahmed Katejew.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: WBC champ Kostya Tszyu's eighth-round kayo of Ahmed Santos moved him from second to first, with WBA titlist Sharmba Mitchell sliding from first to second. Although Zab Judah is now the IBF kingpin, thanks to his fourth-round blastout of Jan Bergman, he stays at number four, due to the fact that the unranked Bergman was not too rigorous of an assignment.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No charges.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Even though IBF champion Mark Johnson is currently serving time in prison *(see page 11)*, he last fought on November 19, 1999, and will keep his number-one spot until he has been inactive for one year.

FLYWEIGHTS: Don't be fooled by the new name at the top of the division; WBA champ Sornpichai Singwangcha is the same guy as Sornpichai Kratchingdaeng. He just changed his name, as many fighters from Thailand do on an exasperatingly regular basis. Saen Sor Ploenchit (eighth last issue) and Jose Bonilla (seventh last issue) have traded places due to Ploenchit's greater activity.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: In another name change, WBA titlist Pichitnoi C. Siriwat now calls himself Pichit C. Siriwat, the reason for which is explained in the "Ringside Report" of his 12-round decision over Sangik Yang *(page 54)*. The victory moved Siriwat up from fourth to third. Rosendo Alvarez, who hasn't had a major fight since losing a thriller to Ricardo Lopez in November '98, falls from third to fourth.

STRAWWEIGHTS: New WBC champion Jose Antonio Aguirre (eighth last issue) advances to second after taking the title from Wandee Singwancha, who used to call himself Wandee Chor Chareon. Wandee toppled from second to fifth.

POUND-FOR-POUND: No changes.

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended February 15, 2000

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Kostya Tszyu rises to number one at junior welter

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *35-1-1 (WBA/WBC/IBF Champ)*
2. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA *36-4-1*
3. **MICHAEL GRANT** Norristown, PA *31-0*
4. **IKE IBEABUCHI** Dallas, TX *20-0*
5. **DAVID TUA** Totowa, NJ *35-1*
6. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY *47-3*
7. **VITALY KLITSCHKO** Ukraine *27-0*
8. **ANDREW GOLOTA** Chicago, IL *34-4*
9. **OLEG MASKAEV** Staten Island, NY *18-2*
10. **DAVID IZON** Pensacola, FL *25-3*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA *18-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **DAVID REID** Philadelphia, PA *14-0 (WBA Champ)*
3. **LAURENT BOUDOUANI** France *38-3-1*
4. **IKE QUARTEY** Ghana *34-1-1*
5. **FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO** Spain *47-4 (WBC Champ)*
6. **HARRY SIMON** Namibia *18-0*
7. **WINKY WRIGHT** St. Petersburg, FL *39-3*
8. **YORY BOY CAMPAS** Mexico *74-3*
9. **KEITH MULLINGS** Brooklyn, NY *16-6-1*
10. **BRONCO McKART** Monroe, MI *39-2*

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **NASEEM HAMED** England *33-0*
2. **FRED NORWOOD** St. Louis, MO *36-0-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **PAUL INGLE** England *22-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **VUYANI BUNGU** South Africa *37-2*
5. **CESAR SOTO** Mexico *53-8-2*
6. **LUISITO ESPINOSA** Philippines *44-8*
7. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico *30-2*
8. **JULIO PABLO CHACON** Argentina *36-0*
9. **MANUEL MEDINA** Mexico *56-11*
10. **MBULELO BOTILE** South Africa *26-1*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **ERIK MORALES** Mexico *35-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Mexico *49-2*
3. **NESTOR GARZA** Mexico *38-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **LEHLO LEDWABA** South Africa *29-1-1 (IBF Champ)*
5. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH** Las Vegas, NV *23-3*
6. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ** Mexico *25-1-1*
7. **ANTONIO CERMENO** Venezuela *34-3*
8. **MANNY PACQUAIO** Philippines *26-2*
9. **JUAN CARLOS RAMIREZ** Mexico *18-2*
10. **MICHAEL BRODIE** England *27-0*

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **TIM AUSTIN** Cincinnati, OH *20-0-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **PAULIE AYALA** Ft. Worth, TX *29-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **JOHNNY TAPIA** Albuquerque, NM *47-1-2*
4. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand *24-1 (WBC Champ)*
5. **NANA KONADU** Ghana *40-4-1*
6. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO** Colombia *42-2*
7. **JULIO GAMBOA** Nicaragua *24-4*
8. **ADAN VARGAS** Mexico *33-1-1*
9. **CUAUHTEMOC GOMEZ** Mexico *46-7*
10. **JOHNNY BREDAHL** Denmark *45-1*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ**
   Germany 29-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 23-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   France 41-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 36-12-1
5. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ**
   Argentina 29-3-1
6. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS**
   Pensacola, FL 32-5-1
7. **JAMES TONEY**
   Las Vegas, NV 59-4-2
8. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England 25-5
9. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 45-3
10. **SAUL MONTANA**
    Mexico 33-7

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL 41-1 (WBC/WBA/IBF Champ)
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 41-0
3. **LOU DEL VALLE**
   Bronx, NY 28-2
4. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX 40-6-1
5. **GRACIANO ROCCHIGIANI**
   Germany 40-4-1
6. **MICHAEL NUNN**
   Davenport, IA 54-4
7. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadephia, PA 18-0-1
8. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 14-0
9. **DAVID TELESCO**
   Port Chester, NY 23-3
10. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
    Chicago, IL 38-3

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 17-0 (IBF Champ)
2. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 20-0-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 28-0
4. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 18-0 (WBC Champ)
5. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 34-6
6. **THOMAS TATE**
   Houston, TX 36-6
7. **FRANKIE LILES**
   N. Hollywood, CA 32-3
8. **RICHIE WOODHALL**
   England 25-2
9. **ROBIN REID**
   England 26-2-1
10. **GLENN CATLEY**
    England 25-3

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Philadelphia, PA 36-2-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 28-1-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **KEITH HOLMES**
   Washington, D.C. 34-2 (WBC Champ)
4. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France 29-3-1
5. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 22-3-1
6. **ROBERT McCRACKEN**
   England 33-0
7. **ARMAND KRAJNC**
   Sweden 22-0
8. **DAVEY HILTON**
   Canada 37-1-3
9. **BERT SCHENK**
   Germany 23-0
10. **RITO RUVALCABA**
    Mexico 27-2

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico 36-0 (IBF/WBC Champ)
2. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA 31-1
3. **JAMES PAGE**
   Pittsburg, CA 25-3 (WBA Champ)
4. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 34-0
5. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 31-0
6. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI 49-3-1
7. **JOSE LUIS LOPEZ**
   Mexico 42-4-2
8. **SHANNAN TAYLOR**
   Australia 26-0-1
9. **WILFREDO RIVERA**
   Puerto Rico 30-4-1
10. **AHMED KATEJEW**
    Russia 25-0

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia 24-1-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 46-2 (WBA Champ)
3. **TERRONN MILLETT**
   St. Louis, MO 22-1-1
4. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 22-0 (IBF Champ)
5. **RANDALL BAILEY**
   Miami, FL 20-0
6. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 30-2
7. **MICKEY WARD**
   Lowell, MA 34-9
8. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 30-4
9. **SHEA NEARY**
   England 22-0
10. **REGGIE GREEN**
    Clinton, MD 30-4

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 29-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 28-4-1
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA 28-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **CESAR BAZAN**
   Mexico 36-3-1
5. **IVAN ROBINSON**
   Philadelphia, PA 29-3
6. **GILBERT SERRANO**
   Venezuela 18-4-2 (WBA Champ)
7. **COLIN DUNNE**
   England 29-1
8. **ARTUR GRIGORIJAN**
   Uzbekistan 28-0
9. **STEFANO ZOFF**
   Italy 28-7-2
10. **JAMES LEIJA**
    San Antonio, TX 39-4-2

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 22-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA 30-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **JONGKWON BAEK**
   South Korea 21-0-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **ROBERTO GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA 32-1
5. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia 12-2-1
6. **YONG SOO CHOI**
   South Korea 26-3-1
7. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Austin, TX 29-1
8. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 24-0
9. **DERRICK GAINER**
   Pensacola, FL 33-4
10. **GOYO VARGAS**
    Mexico 39-6-1

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 38-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **IN JOO CHO**
   South Korea 17-0 (WBC Champ)
3. **HIDEKI TODAKA**
   Japan 16-2-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela 33-7-3
5. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines 40-3-2
6. **YOKTHAI SITHOAR**
   Thailand 19-1-1
7. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia 31-0
8. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN**
   Thailand 35-4
9. **JOEL LUNA-ZARATE**
   Mexico 32-3-2
10. **ERIC MOREL**
    Madison, WI 24-0

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **SORNPICHAI SINGWANGCHA**
   Thailand 18-0 (WBA Champ)
2. **MEDGOEN 3K-BATTERY**
   Thailand 19-0 (WBC Champ)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 24-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **CHATCHAI DUTCHBOY GYM**
   Thailand 34-2
5. **LEO GAMEZ**
   Venezuela 32-7-1
6. **HUGO SOTO**
   Argentina 50-6-2
7. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand 34-1
8. **JOSE BONILLA**
   Venezuela 25-5
9. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 41-3
10. **ISIDRO GARCIA**
    Los Angeles, CA 20-1-1

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico 48-0-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **YEOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 21-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **PICHIT C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 22-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua 26-1-1
5. **SAMAN SORJATURONG**
   Thailand 41-3-1
6. **BABY JAKE MATLALA**
   South Africa 50-10-2
7. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico 58-6-4
8. **WILL GRIGSBY**
   St. Paul, MN 14-2-1
9. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 26-4-1
10. **MICHAEL CARBAJAL**
    Phoenix, AZ 49-4

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

1. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa 15-2-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 22-1-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 39-1-1
4. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 11-1-1 (WBA Champ)
5. **WANDEE SINGWANGCHA**
   Thailand 23-4
6. **SONGKRAM PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 20-2-1
7. **JOSE GARCIA**
   Colombia 22-4-1
8. **ROCKY LIN**
   Philippines 26-2
9. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Columbia 32-2
10. **OSWALDO GUERRERO**
    Mexico 27-5

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NEW FACES

ISIDRO GARCIA

Flyweight

By Joe Santoliquito

Isidro Garcia stood there wondering where he was. His trunks said Vasquez across the waistband, and he had this horrible taste in his mouth that made him feel as if he was about to throw up at any second. Was all this really happening to him? Was he really involved in a title fight?

Only a few hours earlier, the pencil-thin, 5'4" Mexican was just sitting in the lobby of the Fantasy Springs Casino in Indio, California, minding his own business, drinking a soda. He came to watch a fight, not be in one. Time was moving slow. Garcia had nothing on his mind, no worries, when, out of the blue, he was offered an incredible proposition: How about fighting in the main event?

The bout Garcia had come to see involved Jose Lopez and Alejandro Montiel for the vacant WBO 112-pound title. When Montiel fell out hours before the fight due to an injury, there was a mad scramble to try to find a replacement. Someone spotted Garcia's trainer, Javier Capetillo, who had a few fighters on the card, in the lobby and asked him if Garcia would be interested in substituting for Montiel.

Capetillo presented the suggestion to Garcia, who hesitated—for a while. He called his wife, Angelica, three times. He was unprepared, he had no trunks, no equipment

(Continued on page 55)

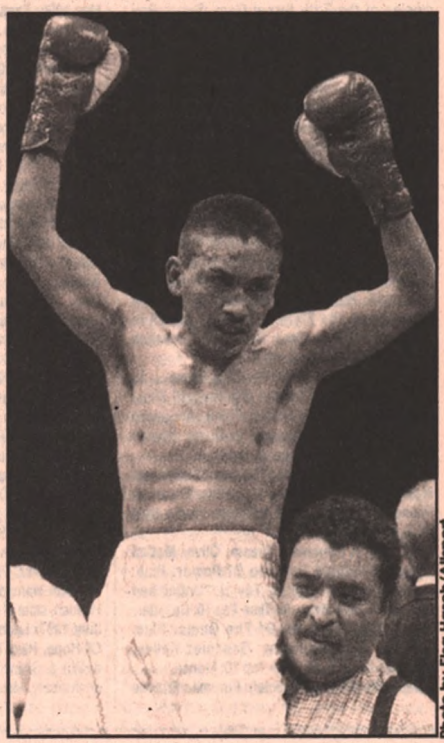
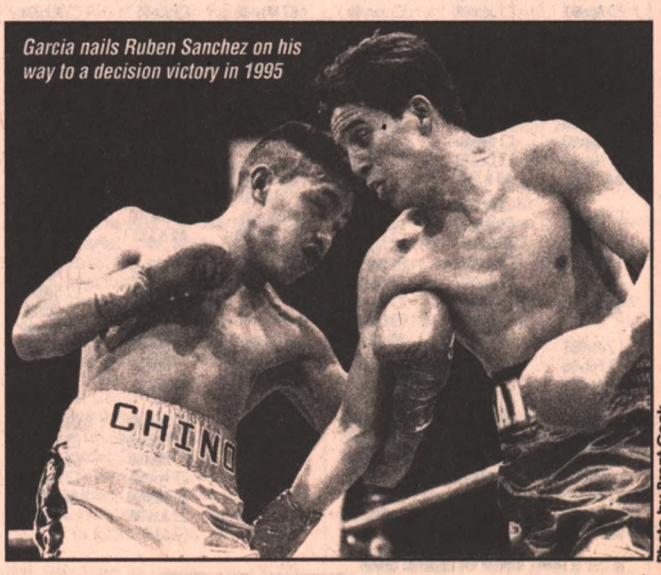


Photo by Elsa Hasch/Allsport



Garcia nails Ruben Sanchez on his way to a decision victory in 1995

Photo by Brent Cook

PRO RECORD

1994		
Sept. 12	Chris Lofton, Inglewood, CA	KO 1
Sept. 24	Jesus Jimenez, Los Angeles	KO 3
Nov. 10	Saul Rios, Irvine, CA	W 4
1995		
June 12	Dario Dias, Inglewood	W 4
July 10	David Burgos, Inglewood	KO 3
Aug. 31	Jose Peralta, Irvine	W 6
Oct. 23	Ruben Sanchez, Inglewood	W 6
1996		
Feb. 29	Ignacio Ocampo, Irvine	W 6
March 30	Lorenzo Trejo, Hunting Park, CA	W 8
Aug. 16	Robert Guillen, Los Angeles	W 6
Oct. 12	Jesus Jimenez, Anaheim, CA	W 6
1997		
Feb. 10	Carlos Hernandez, Inglewood	W 6
April 7	Salvador Casillas, Inglewood	W 6
July 26	Leon Salazar, Las Vegas	KO 3
Sept. 8	Miguel Granados, Inglewood	W Disq. 9
Dec. 1	Sam Stewart, Anaheim	KO by 8
1998		
May 16	Everardo Morales, Las Vegas	W 12
Oct. 5	Jesus Chong, Anaheim	W 12
1999		
March 22	Ruiz Villasana, Inglewood	D 12
June 7	Ruiz Villasana, Inglewood	KO 10
Oct. 4	Oscar Andrade, Inglewood	W 10
Dec. 18	Jose Lopez, Indio, CA	W 12

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
24	22	1	1	5

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Example: Lennox Lewis KOs David Tua to defend his title. Lewis picks up 3 points for the win, 1 for the KO, 1 for defending his title, and 1 for fighting a top 10 contender, for a total of 6 points. Tua loses 3 points for the loss and 1 for the KO, but gains 1 point for fighting a champ resulting in a loss of 3 points

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- ❑ Oscar De La Hoya
- ❑ Naseem Hamed
- ❑ Mark Johnson
- ❑ Roy Jones Jr.
- ❑ Floyd Mayweather
- ❑ Erik Morales
- ❑ Shane Mosley
- ❑ Felix Trinidad

Close to the Top
- ❑ Tim Austin
- ❑ Paulie Ayala
- ❑ Marco A. Barrera
- ❑ Diego Corrales
- ❑ Bernard Hopkins
- ❑ William Joppy
- ❑ Lennox Lewis
- ❑ Ricardo Lopez

Heavy Contenders
- ❑ Chris Byrd
- ❑ Michael Grant
- ❑ Ike Ibeabuchi
- ❑ Kirk Johnson
- ❑ Vitaly Klitschko
- ❑ Wladimir Klitschko
- ❑ Oleg Maskaev
- ❑ David Tua

No Respect
- ❑ Javier Castillejo
- ❑ In Joo Cho
- ❑ Keith Holmes
- ❑ Paul Ingle
- ❑ Manuel Medina
- ❑ Byron Mitchell
- ❑ James Page
- ❑ Gilberto Serrano

More Exposure
- ❑ David Izon
- ❑ Kofi Jantuah
- ❑ Robbie Peden
- ❑ Jason Pires
- ❑ Mamadou Thiam
- ❑ Oktay Ukral
- ❑ Lance Whitaker
- ❑ Rick Yoshimura

Exs
- ❑ Cesar Bazan
- ❑ Michael Carbajal
- ❑ Hector Camacho
- ❑ Antonio Cermeno
- ❑ Julio Cesar Chavez
- ❑ Luisito Espinosa
- ❑ Evander Holyfield
- ❑ Mike Tyson

In Command
- ❑ Nestor Garza
- ❑ Stevie Johnston
- ❑ Sharmba Mitchell
- ❑ Freddie Norwood
- ❑ David Reid
- ❑ Paul Spadafora
- ❑ Kastya Tszyu
- ❑ Fernando Vargas

More Contenders
- ❑ Antwun Echols
- ❑ Julio Cesar Green
- ❑ Richard Hall
- ❑ Robert McCracken
- ❑ Lovemore N'Dou
- ❑ Antonio Tarver
- ❑ David Telesco
- ❑ Clinton Woods

Oh, So Close
- ❑ Randall Bailey
- ❑ Joel Cassamayor
- ❑ Zab Judah
- ❑ D. Michalszewski
- ❑ Eric Morel
- ❑ Omar Sheika
- ❑ Harry Simon
- ❑ Ike Quartey

Europa
- ❑ Thomas Daamgaard
- ❑ Artur Grigorian
- ❑ Julien Lorcy
- ❑ Jean B. Mendy
- ❑ Brian Nielsen
- ❑ D Holbaek Pedersen
- ❑ G. Rocchigiani
- ❑ Burt Schenk

Up & Comers
- ❑ Hassan Al
- ❑ Lamon Brewster
- ❑ Hector Camacho Jr.
- ❑ Guty Espadas Jr.
- ❑ Vivian Harris
- ❑ Derrick Jefferson
- ❑ Agapito Sanchez
- ❑ Cory Spinks

Ranked What?
- ❑ Henry Akinwande
- ❑ Brian Barbosa
- ❑ Larry Donald
- ❑ Raul Frank
- ❑ Tracy H. Patterson
- ❑ John Ruiz
- ❑ Rito Ruvalcaba
- ❑ Alberto Siccurella

Smaller Contenders
- ❑ Jesus Chavez
- ❑ Derrell Coley
- ❑ Vernon Forrest
- ❑ Acelino Freitas
- ❑ Ahmed Kotiev
- ❑ Andrew Lewis
- ❑ Shannon Taylor
- ❑ Michael Trabant

Wee Contenders
- ❑ Johnny Bredahl
- ❑ Mbulelo Botile
- ❑ Julio Pablo Chacon
- ❑ Billy Irwin
- ❑ Angel Manfredy
- ❑ Wayne McCullough
- ❑ Billy Schwer
- ❑ Johnny Tapia

Could Be a Factor
- ❑ Lincoln Carter
- ❑ Hassine Cherifi
- ❑ Eric Harding
- ❑ Juan Marquez
- ❑ Ivan Robinson
- ❑ Dana Rosenblatt
- ❑ Syd Vanderpoole
- ❑ Winky Wright

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CAMERA CLICKS

Photo by Brian Cannon/DKP

Felix "Tito" Trinidad must not have gotten the message about the attire for this party, unless vinyl warmups were big in ancient Rome and the rest of us just don't know about it.

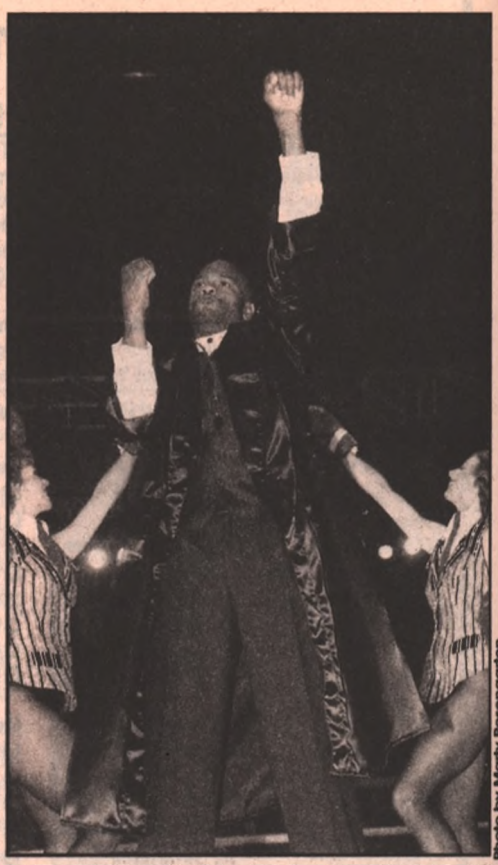


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Roy Jones, sick of being constantly criticized for holding his hands too low when he fights, shows off his new boxing stance. If there's one guy who can get away with this kind of form, it's the undisputed light heavyweight king.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Ah, round-card girls. We'll gladly salute any flag these scantily clad ladies are holding.

Photo by Frank Vitucci

This photo should pretty well explain why Lennox Lewis ties his hair back when he fights. Although, then again, the flopping dreadlocks could provide just the kind of distraction Lewis needs to make opponents forget there's a big right hand coming their way, too.

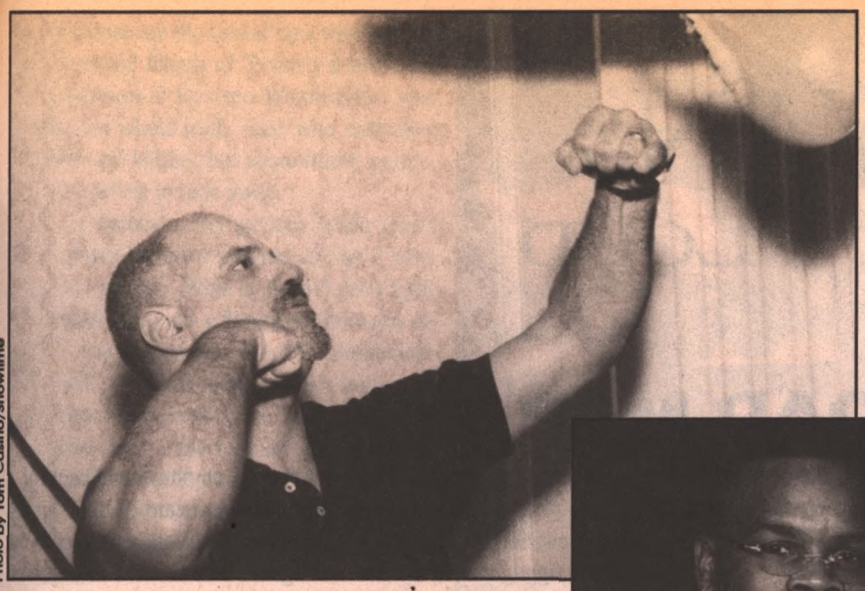


Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime

Showtime Championship Boxing Executive Producer Jay Larkin demonstrates what he's going to do to Lou DiBella if HBO doesn't back off and let Showtime televise the potential Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson fight. Larkin appears to be in better shape here than Julio Cesar Chavez was the last time he fought on Showtime.

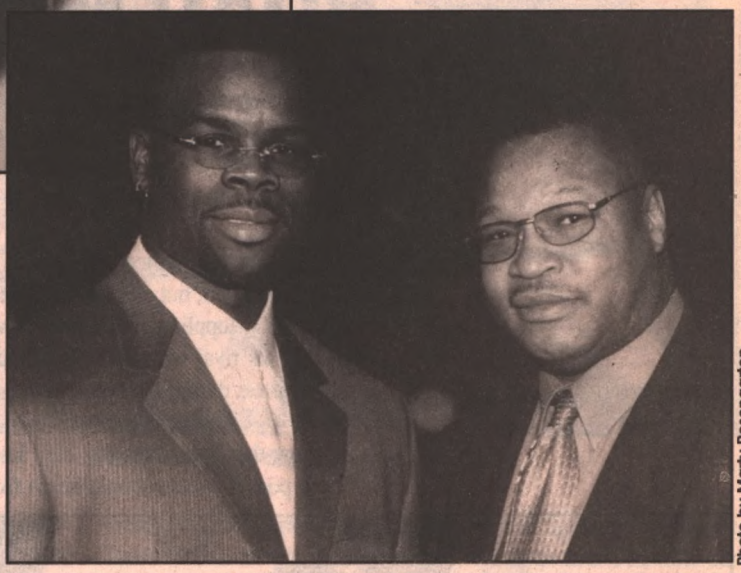


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Do these two well-tailored, bespectacled gentlemen look like the fighting sort? Boxing fans know them as Michael Grant and Larry Holmes, one of today's best heavyweights and one of the best of all-time, respectively. "The Easton Assassin" and "The Norristown Nice Guy" met up at the Roy Jones-David Telesco fight in January.

Photo by Greg Cava/HBO

Gee, we wonder why Larry Merchant has that big smile on his face. "I'll take you two over Lampley and Foreman anyday," the veteran fight analyst told the round-card girls.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Hall of Famer Fritzie Zivic is regarded as one of the dirtiest fighters of all-time, which is why he was called upon to get this dirty job done. The former welterweight champ is shown changing the diaper of his three-month-old daughter, Marie, in this 1942 photograph.

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

ROAD MAP

Shelly Finkel needs my business advice the way he needs a Johnny Bumphus comeback or a few more dead hair follicles. Long before the boxing industry had ever heard of him, Finkel promoted a rock concert that drew 600,000 people to a racetrack in Watkins Glen, New York. And since he's been a part of the fight game, Finkel has managed a dozen world champions. Suffice to say, the guy doesn't have to drop into a Salvation Army shelter for soup when he gets hungry.

Finkel's current project, of course, is guiding the career of Mike Tyson. It's a dirty job that someone has to do, but also an irresistible challenge for a deal-maker/career-planner/babysitter like Finkel. Tyson toppling Julius Francis without resorting to biting, arm-wrenching, hitting late, or strangling his rival with the ring announcer's microphone cord, not to mention "Leg-Iron" Mike avoiding arrest during the entire month of January, could already qualify Finkel for Adviser of the Year.

So now that Tyson has this easy knockout victory and Trans-Atlantic feel-good experience in his back pocket, where should he go from here? Well, if the rumors about Tyson's future plans—the quality of his tuneup opponents, the television outlets he intends to appear on, and the timing of his title shot—are true, Finkel would be wise to consult me immediately. My ideas for how to chart Tyson Career IV (or is it V?) sound a lot better than his, and my advice can be had for free. In fact, let me save Team Tyson a phone call and simply map it all out right here.

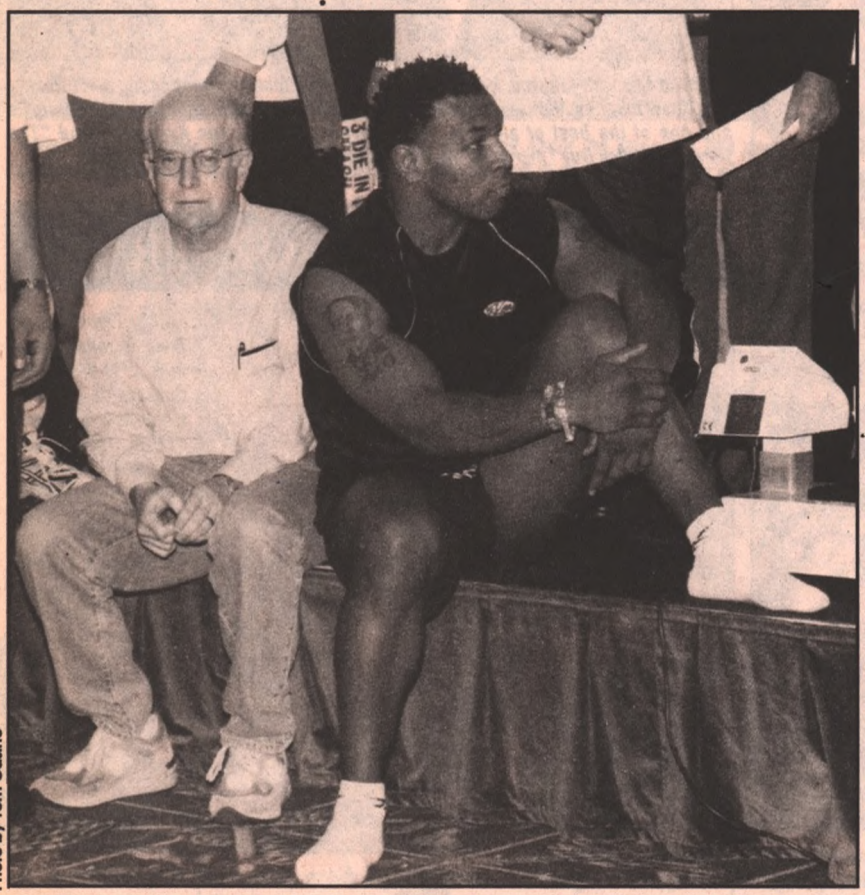


Photo by Tom Casino

Ryan has some advice for Finkel and Tyson

This is no doubt Tyson's final go-round before he a) turns into another Julio Cesar Chavez, a once-brilliant warrior who hangs on for the paydays, b) signs with the World Wrestling Federation, or c) trades in the "Be Real" shirt for a jumpsuit with numbers stenciled on the front. In other words, it's the very last of the last chances. Thus, Tyson must set three lofty goals for the next year: regaining the heavyweight title, elevating his standing in history, and improving his public image.

Being able to bleach the stains from his name might be impossible, but Tyson must at least try. There will always be Tyson-lovers, those same idiots who wore "Free Mike Tyson" T-shirts when he was in the slammer, and passionate Tyson-haters who view him as pure evil. The people the ex-champion has to win over are the indepen-

dents. Those are the casual fans who know a rap sheet the length of Tyson's doesn't lie, yet question if Desiree Washington was telling the whole truth. Fans who hate dirty fighters and bullies, but adore titanic punchers who refuse to fade away.

If he listens to my advice, Tyson won't have a very lucrative summer, but he'll have a productive one. What he should do is fight in Atlantic City on a Saturday afternoon on ABC. That's right, network TV. (Remember it?) ABC, which is looking to air boxing in 2000 after broadcasting no fights last year, has open dates in the summer and would kill to land Tyson if it could only afford him. Well, it can if Tyson fights for whatever ABC can pay him, probably $150,000 to $300,000.

(With an $11-million purse for the Francis bout in the bank and the promise of at least $20-million for an eventual title shot, trust me, Tyson won't have to take on a second job delivering pizza.)

The opponent wouldn't matter and, considering how much money would be left over to pay the pug, he'd no doubt be a notch below a tomato can. Probably something along the lines of a tomato bag. Heck, lure Marvis Frazier out of retirement and blast him out in 30 seconds again if you must. The idea here is simply to reintroduce the masses to the very best of Tyson. That means obeying the rules, scoring a picturesque knockout, displaying sportsmanship, cooperating for a prefight profile piece, and answering all postfight questions without cursing, making obscene gestures, or proclaiming his innocence.

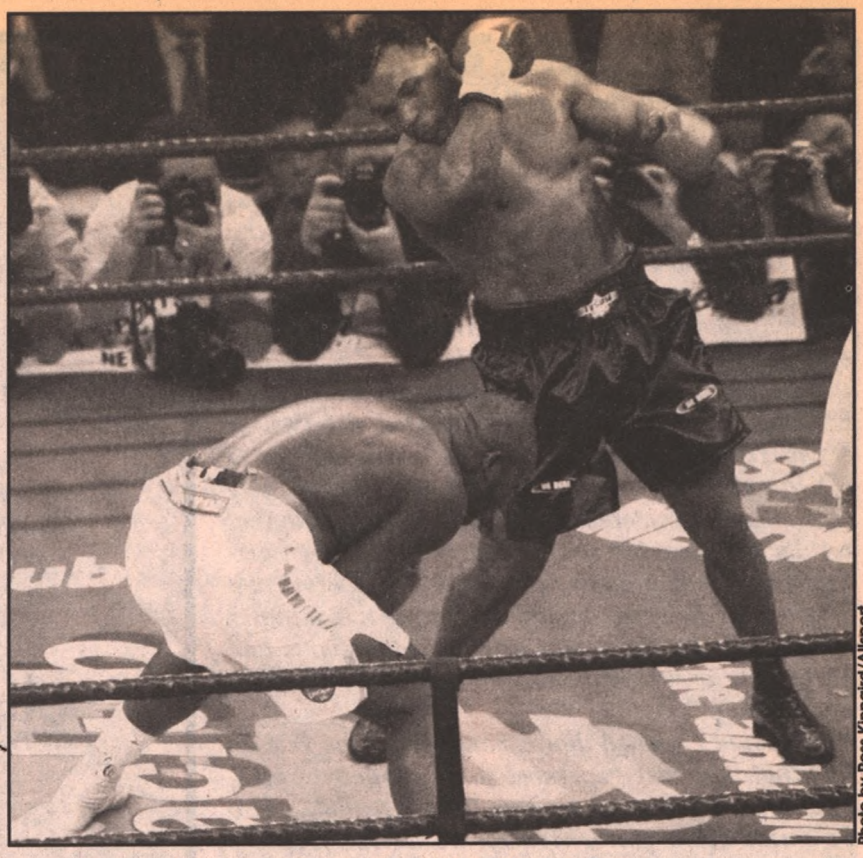


Photo by Ross Kinnaird/Allsport

Francis managed to duck this will shot from Tyson

After that, my recommendation is for an autumn bout in London, where Tyson has proved he's incredibly popular and where he increases interest in a clash with Lennox Lewis with each left hook he digs into the heavybag on the nightly news. The opponent this time will be the toughest fellow contender available. Ike Ibeabuchi tops the list. If Ibeabuchi is handcuffed, literally or figuratively, by his legal problems or would rather wait for a title shot, then Tyson can meet David Tua. Or Vitaly Klitschko.

Sometime between being upset by Evander Holyfield in '96 and chasing the belt in 2000, Tyson became just another contender leery of taking risks. Does he doubt his ability? Let's find out. A win over one of the aforementioned bombers would be the best possible preparation for facing Lewis and it would give Tyson the kind of credibility he hasn't had since he left prison five years ago. He'd be viewed as the legitimate number-one contender, not someone who's getting a title shot on name alone.

Now, on to that title shot. Assuming Lewis still sits on the throne, let's stage it in Wembley Stadium in the spring of 2001. Eighty-thousand fans. A worldwide pay-per-view audience. And at stake the linear crown and whatever belts haven't been stripped from Lewis for refusing to fight Henry Akinwande, John Ruiz, Harold Lederman, or whoever else the alphabets mandated. Tyson will be 34, and as prepared as he'll ever be to fight the 35-year-old Lewis, whose height, jab, and power will make him a favorite but hardly a lock. Especially if Tyson is in shape, inspired, and able to work his way inside.

A victory puts Tyson back in the good graces of the historians, some of whom were calling him one of the three greatest heavyweights ever following his destruction of Michael Spinks, but were bouncing him out of the all-time top 10 after he was upset by Holyfield. If Tyson fights like a warrior and either loses a close decision or gets knocked out in a war, his reputation will be enhanced. But should he get stopped early or dominated, he'll be remembered as one of the most overrated superstars to ever do battle.

Should he regain the belt and escape with minimal wear and tear, my advice is for Tyson to make two title defenses, one easy and one tough, and then walk away. If he falls to Lewis, retirement is the only option. And between now and that title shot next spring, I'd make sure Tyson keeps a low profile, hires a full-time driver, stays out of bars, spends all evenings away from training camp with the wife and kids, and invests most of his money in funds he can't touch for 20 years.

If Tyson follows *my* game plan, he'll keep his name out of David Letterman's monologue and off the gossip pages, too. And, even if he falls short of those three goals, he'll finish his career with some dignity and repair some of the damage of the past. But far be it from me to second-guess Finkel or anyone else.

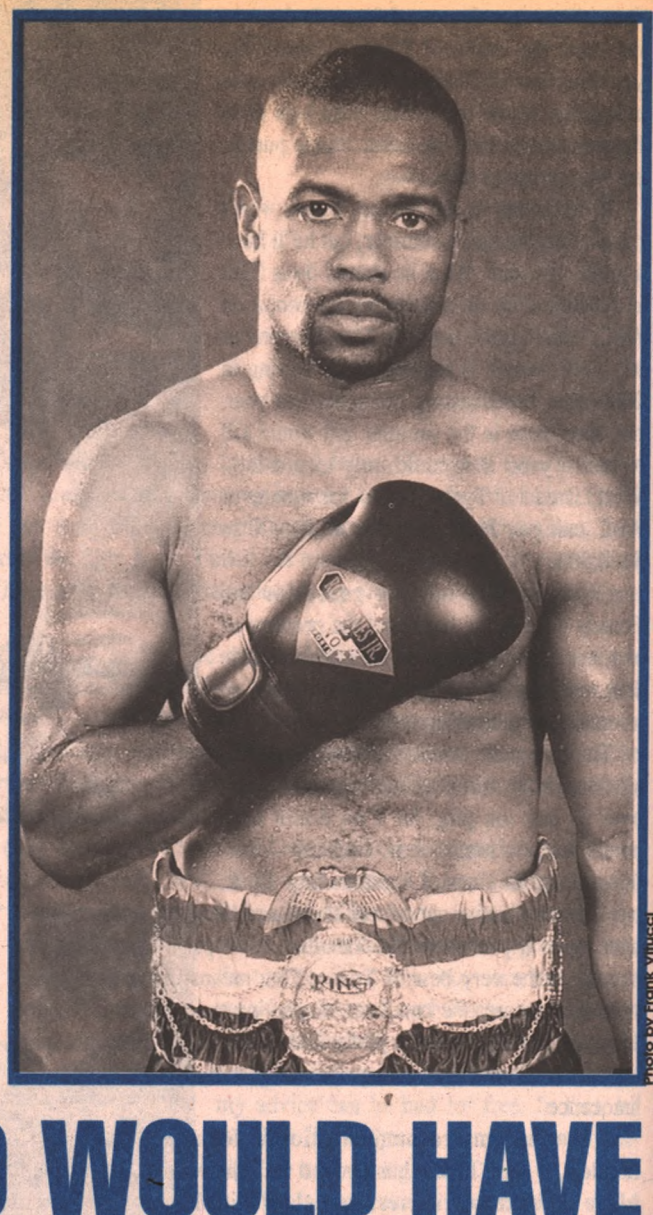
By the way, Shelly, that concert of yours featured The Allman Brothers, The Grateful Dead, and The Band. If you would have only added Led Zeppelin to the bill, you'd have drawn 700,000 fans at least. ■

There are few anymore who doubt undisputed light heavyweight champion Roy Jones' standing as the world's best fighter. And with every victory, more and more observers are conferring on him all-time-great status. Whether or not it's accurate, that line of thought has generated backlash from some of the game's old school hard-liners, who are certain that the record books are full of fighters who could've whipped two Roy Joneses and a Bernard Hopkins in one night and still had enough left over for Lennox Lewis.

One such observer is veteran promoter Don Elbaum. Right before Jones' one-sided victory over David Telesco in January, Elbaum wrote a letter to HBO analyst Larry Merchant that essentially lamented the "watered down" state of the game that results in a good but not great fighter like Jones getting more credit than he deserves. Elbaum wrote that Jones "has flaws so apparent" that in five minutes he jotted down the names of 10 middleweights and 10 light heavyweights who would defeat him "without question."

It should be noted that Elbaum promotes Telesco and that the letter generated some publicity, which, of course, is a promoter's best friend. It should also be noted that, conveniently, no active fighters appeared on Elbaum's list, and that includes Telesco. Way to go out on a limb, Don.

At any rate, in this feature, THE RING takes it one step further and tells you why and how five middleweight greats and five light heavyweight greats from Elbaum's list would have handled Roy Jones. Call it conjecture, call it speculation, call it whatever you like. We call it ...



10 GUYS WHO WOULD HAVE KICKED ROY JONES' BUTT

By William Dettloff

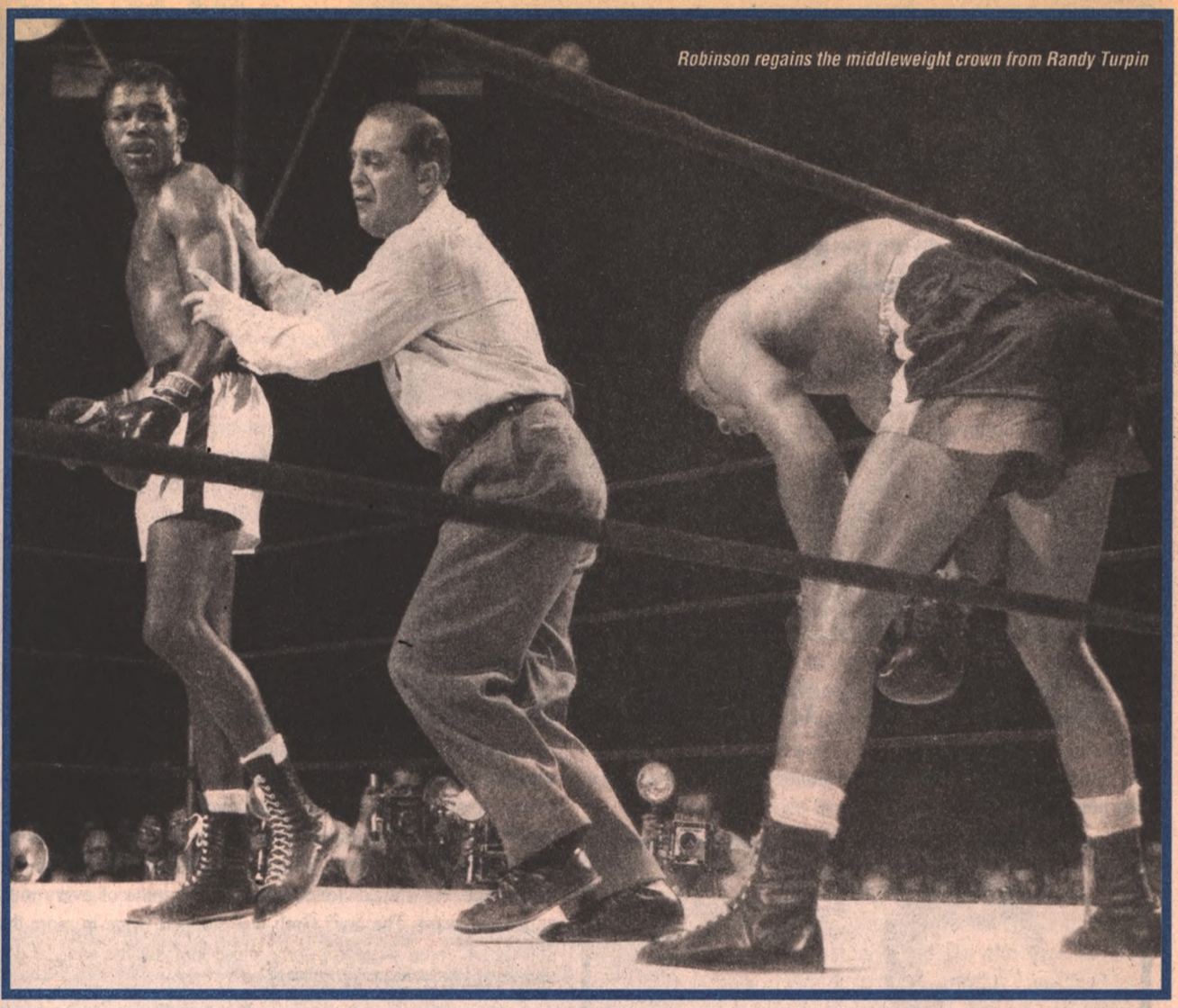
RAY ROBINSON

Record: 175-19-6 (109) with 2 no-contests

World Titles: Welterweight (1946-'51); Middleweight (1951, '51-'52, '55, '57, '58-'60)

Robinson is the only guy to whom even Jones' most fervent supporters will grudgingly concede superiority. That's for good reason, of course. Robinson is generally recognized as, pound-for-pound, the best fighter in the history of the game. It's hard to argue with his accomplishments, and there is every reason to believe he would have stopped Jones outright.

The physical advantages Jones holds over every fighter he's faced would not exist against Robinson. Robinson, at middleweight, was nearly as fast as Jones and just as powerful. Moreover, he's more experienced and more committed to going to war than Jones will ever be. His ability to take a punch was unequaled; he was stopped just once in 202 bouts, that in his famous bid for Joey Maxim's light heavyweight title. He would have nothing to fear against Jones, and as a result would go right to him, bombing away. Jones would land his share and maybe



Robinson regains the middleweight crown from Randy Turpin

open up some of the scar tissue around Robinson's tender eyes. But Robinson's offense would be too much. He'd dominate from the start, batter Jones, break him down on the inside, and stop him by the ninth.

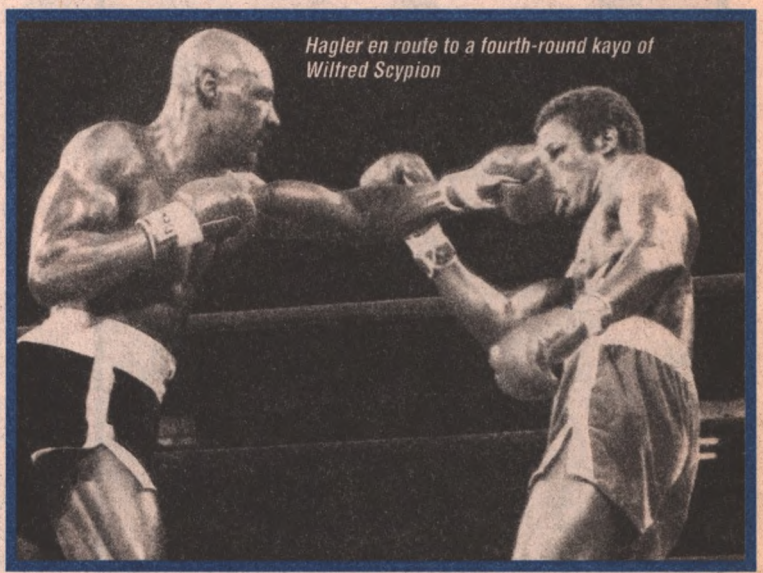
Don't be misled by Jones' success against his southpaw contemporaries. Otis Grant, Lou Del Valle, Rick Frazier, and Reggie Johnson couldn't carry Hagler's spit bucket. Also, Hagler's granite jaw withstood the bombs of Thomas Hearns and John Mugabi.

MARVIN HAGLER

Record: 62-3-2 (52)

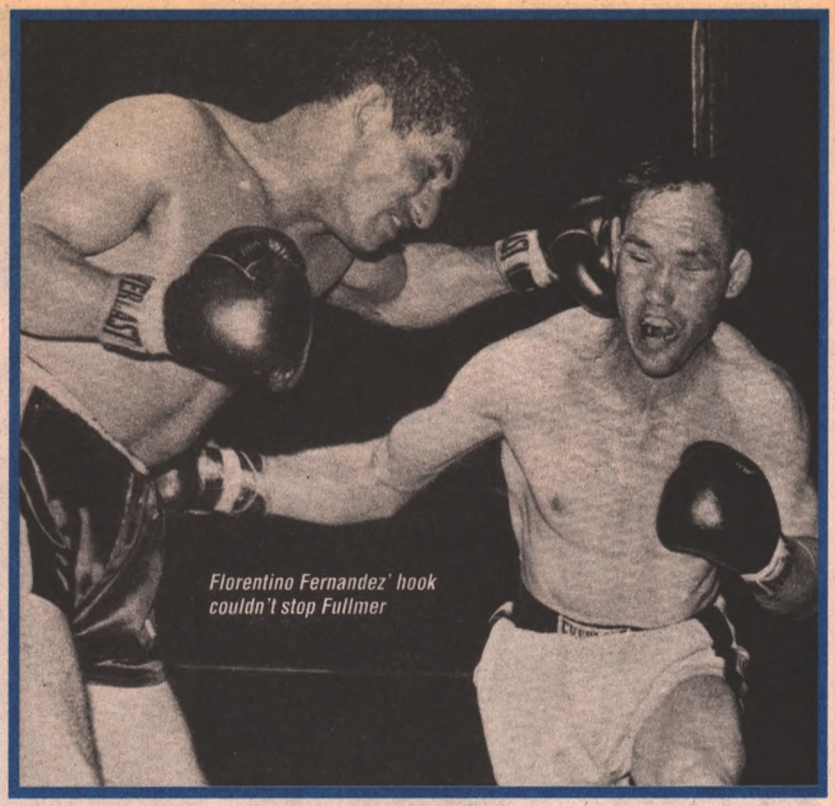
World Title: Middleweight (1980-'87)

If all you remember about Hagler is his 1987 loss to Sugar Ray Leonard, it's easy to conclude that Jones would just be too fast for him. But Hagler was 33 and past his prime in '87. A prime Hagler, say the 1980 version, was a slick, fast, hard-punching technician, and Jones' superior speed would not be as major a factor as Leonard's was. In his prime, Hagler was a more complete fighter. Go to him, and he ground you up with counters. Run from him, and he hunted you down. He could adapt to any style, and against Jones he'd walk in behind that stiff right jab, work the body, and crack Jones with counter right hooks. And he'd be just fast enough to take advantage of the mistakes Jones commits.



Hagler en route to a fourth-round kayo of Wilfred Scypion

He'd handle Jones' best shots, too, in part because Jones wouldn't engage him. Jones would take an early lead, but by the middle rounds Hagler's pressure would begin to wear him down. Late, it would be all Marvelous Marvin. Hagler by unanimous decision.

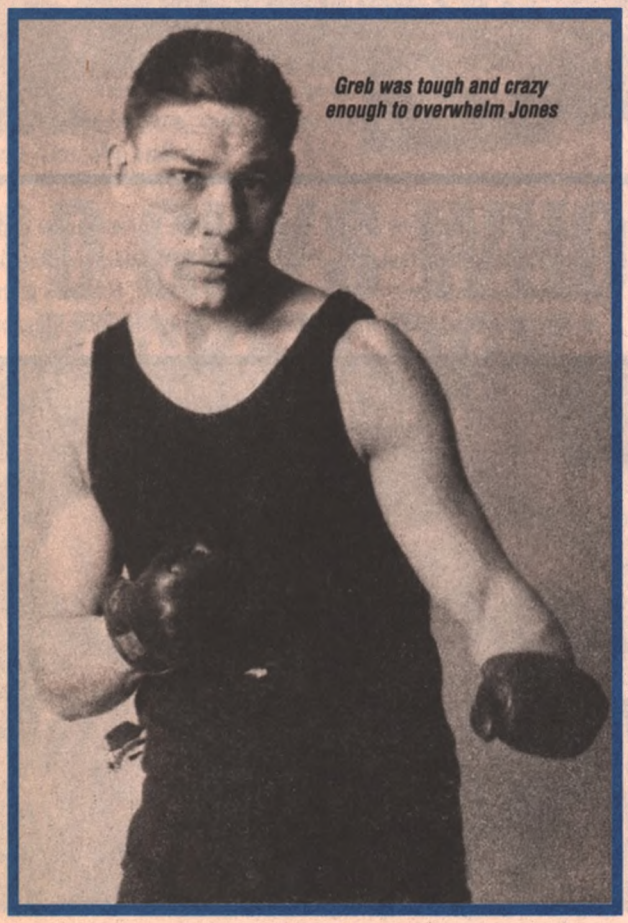

Florentino Fernandez' hook couldn't stop Fullmer

HARRY GREB

Record: 115-8-3 (51) with 183 no-decisions

World Title: Middleweight (1923-'26)

Let's face it: It's difficult to picture a little white guy who looks like an extra from the cast of *The Bowery Boys* beating Jones. But there's a reason a lot of historians still consider Greb one of the two or three best middleweights ever. "The Pittsburgh Windmill" was able to beat, among others, Gene Tunney, Tommy Gibbons, Tommy Loughran, Maxie Rosenbloom, and Mickey Walker, and being blind in one eye didn't slow him down one iota. What was the reason? He was nuts. Crazy as a loon. At least in the ring. Crazy and dirty as hell. You couldn't discourage him, you couldn't intimidate him, and you couldn't figure him out. You didn't have time.


Greb was tough and crazy enough to overwhelm Jones

Was Greb as talented as Jones? Not on his best day. But he was ferocious enough and fearless enough to completely throw Jones off of his game. It wouldn't matter how many lead right hands Jones bounced off of Greb's face. Greb would grin and launch a two-minute flurry followed by a headbutt and both laces to the face. He'd make Jones fight every minute of every round going backward. The jaw? Greb was stopped twice in more than 300 fights. Jones wouldn't come close and, by the end, he'd be glad it was over. Greb by decision.

GENE FULLMER

Record: 55-6-3 (24)

World Title: Middleweight (1957, '59-'62)

Ever wondered what Jones would do against a bull-strong, anvil-chinned hooker who refused to take a backward step? A hard-slugging mauler as good with his head, shoulders, and elbows as he was his fists? Fullmer wasn't on the same planet as Jones in terms of skill and talent. He was crude and awkward as hell, but his brawling, swing-for-the-fences style would have given Jones fits.

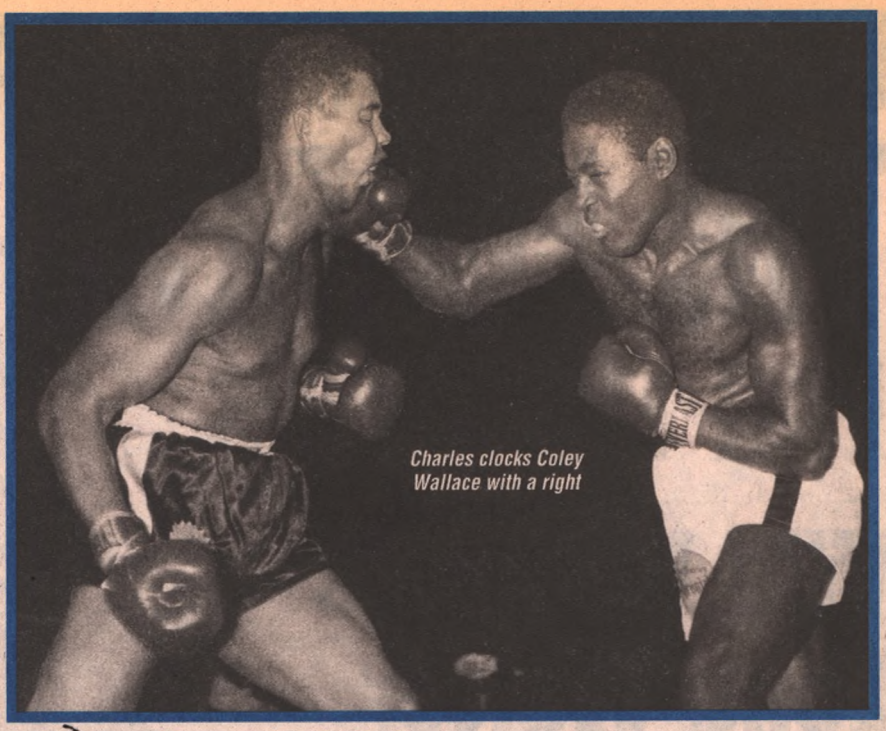
Jones wouldn't have been able to time Fullmer or anticipate his moves because even Fullmer didn't know what he was going to do half of the time. Nor would Jones hurt him; Fullmer was stopped just twice in his career, by Sugar Ray Robinson and Dick Tiger. A lot of others tried: Carmen Basilio, Benny Paret, Joey Giardello, Florentino Fernandez. Fullmer fought each of them the way he fought everyone: Bore ahead, crank up some power, and follow up with a nice shoulder or elbow to the thorax. Overhand right, left to the body, skull to the cheekbone. Leather on flesh, bone on flesh over and over until you went down or said to hell with it and quit. Fullmer by decision or late kayo.

CHARLIE BURLEY

Record: 84-11-2 (50) with 1 no-contest

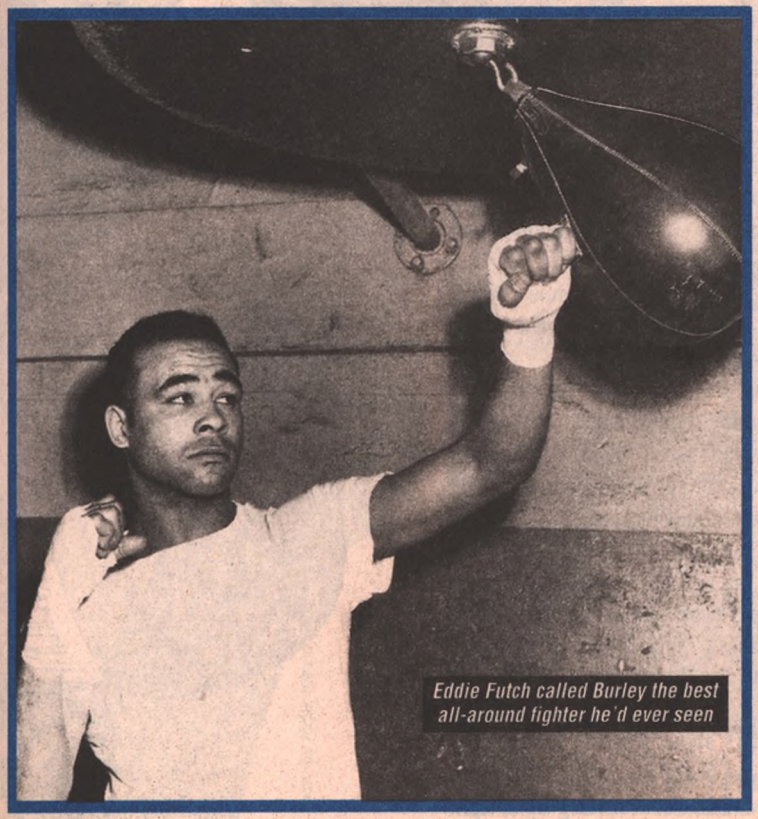
World Title: None

A lot of people have never heard of Burley. He was never a champion so it's understandable, but through much of the 1930s and '40s, he was one of the best middleweights in the world and everyone knew it; that was one of the reasons he never got a title shot. Not after beating Fritzie Zivic and Billy Soose, or after twice going the distance with future heavyweight champion Ezzard Charles. Not even after beating light heavyweight legend Archie Moore in '44—as a middleweight. At the end of his career, Moore called Burley the toughest fighter he'd ever faced. Hall of Fame trainer Eddie Futch once said Burley was the best all-around fighter he'd ever seen.



Charles clocks Coley Wallace with a right

Burley could box or punch, depending on the strengths of his opponent. The guess here is that Jones, a counterpuncher by nature, would allow Burley to come forward while he looked for countering opportunities. He'd find them, but nothing would hurt Burley, who wasn't stopped in 98 bouts. And while Jones was looking to counter, Burley would be working him over on the inside, roughing him up in corners, and taking a clear-cut unanimous decision.



Eddie Futch called Burley the best all-around fighter he'd ever seen

EZZARD CHARLES

Record: 96-25-1 (58)

World Title: Heavyweight (1950-'51)

A lot of younger fight fans recall Charles as the guy who gave Rocky Marciano a rough time in two failed title tries. What a shame. They should remember him as arguably the greatest light heavyweight ever, even though he never won the title in that weight class because he never received a shot. What else would you call a fighter who beat the great Archie Moore three times, once by knockout? How else could you describe a 175-pounder who defeated Joey Maxim, Charley Burley, Jimmy Bivins, and Gus Lesnevich?

That Charles rose to 190 pounds and won and defended the heavyweight title is proof enough that he was too big and too strong for Jones, who is really more super middleweight than light heavy. But Charles was no big, slow lummox. He was quick and sharp and, mechanically, one of the best in the game throughout the 1940s and early-'50s. He would have been in Jones' face from the opening bell, pushing him back, stabbing him with jabs, and walking through his counters. Only Jones' speed would enable him to last past the first few rounds. Charles in five in a walkover.

ARCHIE MOORE

Record: 183-24-10 (141) with 1 no-contest

World Title: Light Heavyweight (1952-'60)

By now you've seen the films of Moore's most famous fights: the losses to Rocky Marciano, Floyd

(Continued on page 58)

WHY THE PUBLIC CAN'T SEE THE FORREST FOR THE TREES

Will Vernon's Long Welter Wait Ever End?

Photo by Frank Vitucci

By Kevin Iole

The public loves a winner. Vernon Forrest wins. The public loves knockouts. Vernon Forrest delivers knockouts. The public loves a showman. Vernon Forrest has flair. But for all he does have, there are two things that the 29-year-old Georgian doesn't have—a world title belt or a solid chance to fight for one in the near future.

It just doesn't seem right. With so many titleholders having less than 20 bouts experience, here is a fighter who is 31-0 (25), and he is largely unknown by the public. That, however, is the fate that has befallen Forrest. And, unless he gets incredibly fortunate, that may not change for a while.

Oscar De La Hoya, the man who prints the money in the welterweight division, has Shane Mosley and Felix Trinidad in his sights. Mosley is eying De La Hoya. Trinidad would like a rematch with De La Hoya and the $20-million or so that it would bring, but he's also talking of bouts with WBA middleweight champion William Joppy and undisputed light heavyweight champion Roy Jones.

Forrest, for all his accomplishments, seems destined to remain a warmup act for the division's biggest stars.

"Right now, Oscar's schedule doesn't include a fight with Forrest," said De La Hoya's promoter, Bob Arum.

And that seems to be the case with the majority of the top contenders in the 147-pound class. You've heard of the man without a country; well, Forrest is the fighter without an opponent.

"It's a crime what's happened to this kid," said his manager, Lou Duva. "He is the best welterweight in the world. The best. We would fight De La Hoya today. Call him up and get him here; we're ready. The same with Trinidad, or Shane Mosley. Mosley talks about wanting to fight the best, but you heard me, when I yelled to Mosley's father about setting up a fight

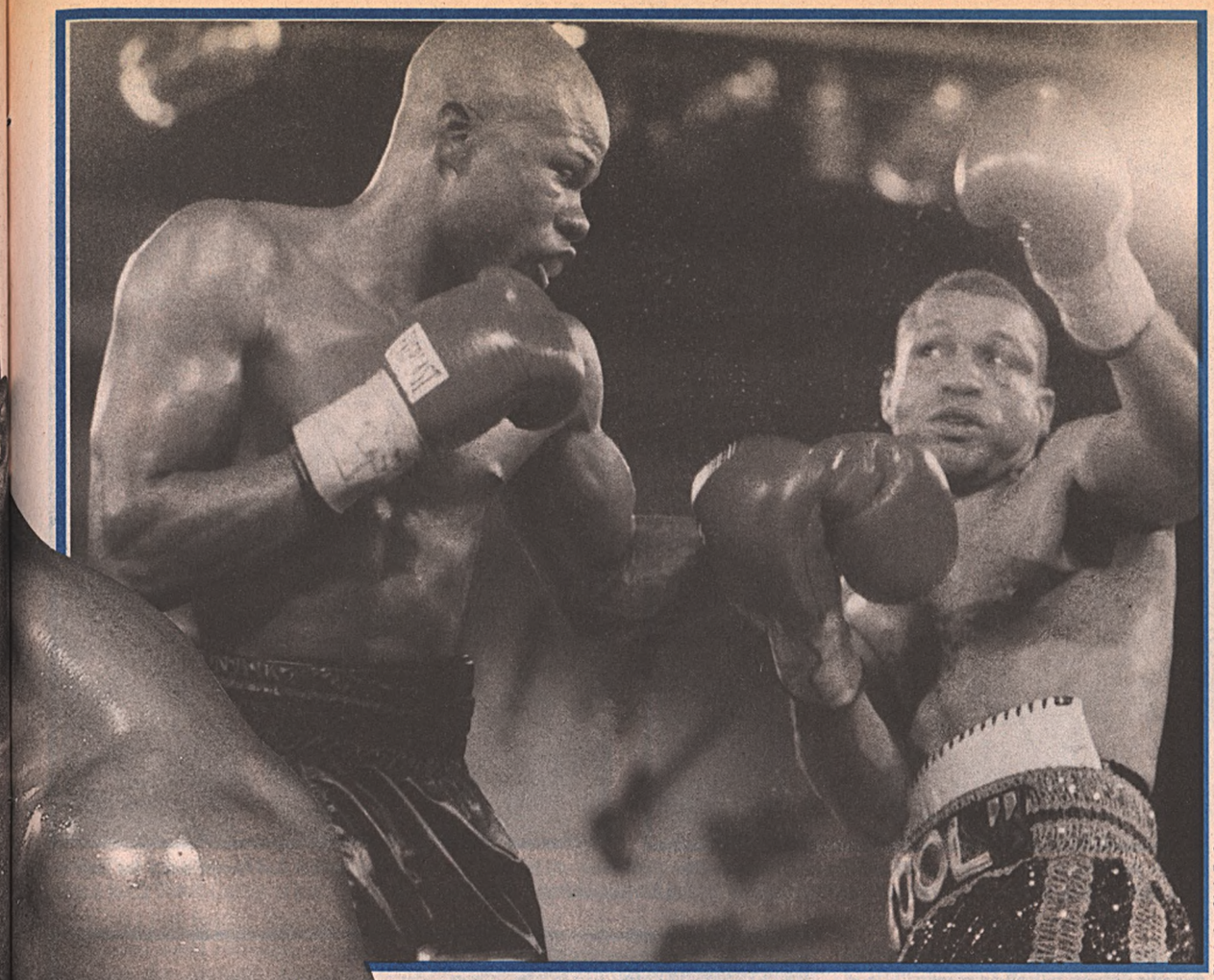
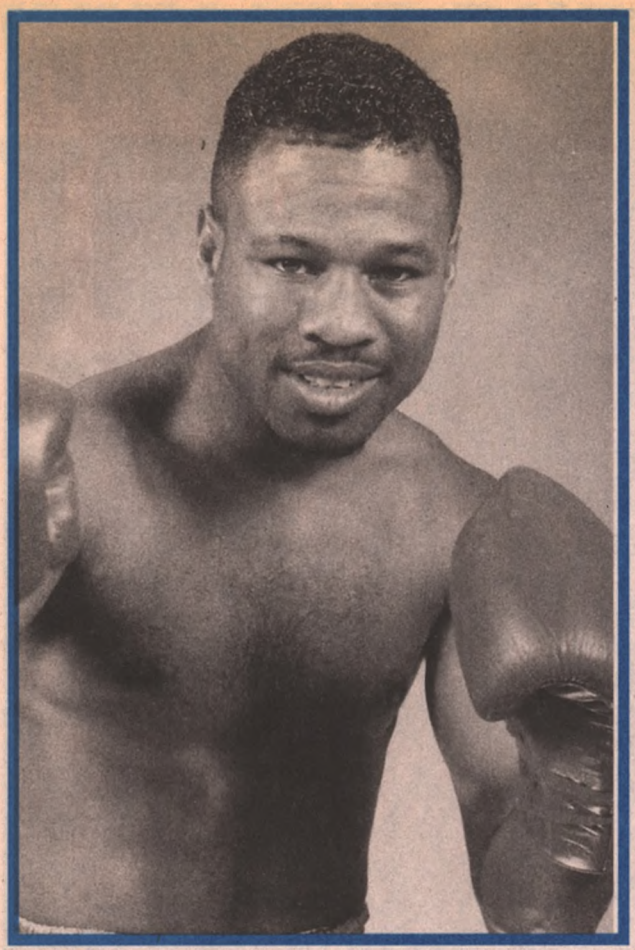


Photo by Chris Farina

Making his first HBO appearance, Forrest rocks Vince Phillips en route to a unanimous decision. The undefeated welterweight won with plenty of room to spare, but wasn't particularly spectacular doing so.

Photo by Chris Farina

Although he was fighting above his best weight, former 140-pound champ Phillips was in good shape and managed to give Forrest a few uncomfortable moments. This raised new questions about exactly how good the relatively untested Forrest really is.



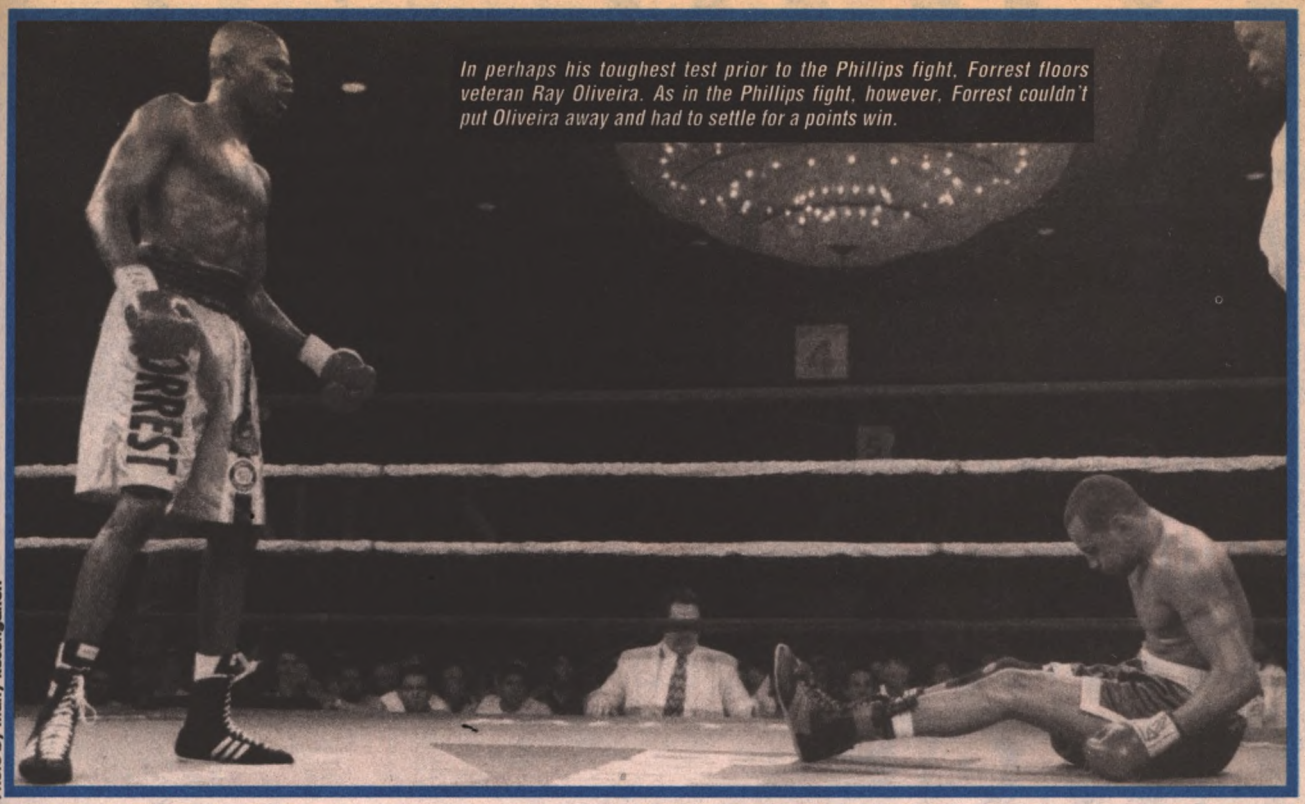
Former lightweight champion Shane Mosley (left) and three-division titlist Oscar De La Hoya are the two opponents that Forrest wants the most to fight. Unfortunately for him, "Sugar Shane" and "The Golden Boy" are more interested in fighting each other.

with Vernon, he didn't say okay. The first thing he did was talk about money."

Forrest yearns for a major fight, one that would put him in the spotlight and make him a player in the sport in which he has been so successful. He carved out a spectacular amateur career, going 225-16 and compiling wins over future world champions Mosley and Stevie Johnston. He earned a berth on the 1992 U.S. Olympic team, but that may have been the start of Forrest's problems. While the '92 Games in Barcelona helped lift De La Hoya to stratospheric heights, they did nothing for Forrest. He lost his first bout (to England's Peter Richardson) and, in the process, the opportunity to market himself to an attentive worldwide audience. Olympians with a track record get pushed; those who lose in their first fight, like Forrest, often get shunned.

"That hurt me," the soft-spoken Forrest said of his Olympic loss. "A lot of good things would have happened to me if I had won. We wouldn't be having

Forrest's marketing problems began when he lost to Great Britain's Peter Richardson in the first round of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. The early exit left him miles behind teammate De La Hoya, who won a gold medal and became an instant star.



In perhaps his toughest test prior to the Phillips fight, Forrest floors veteran Ray Oliveira. As in the Phillips fight, however, Forrest couldn't put Oliveira away and had to settle for a points win.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

this conversation now. But ... "

Now, Forrest is left to pick on the leftovers. He thoroughly beat a game but apparently washed-up Vince Phillips on a January 22 *Boxing After Dark* card at the Hard Rock Hotel-Casino in Las.Vegas. His wish was that beating Phillips, a former 140-pound world champion, would propel him into the spotlight and make people demand to see him. Alas, even though Forrest completely dominated Phillips—who came to fight and was in shape, unlike when he lost the IBF junior welterweight title to Terronn Millett—it did him little good.

Forrest did a lot of good things. He boxed superbly, picked off a lot of punches, forced Phillips to fight his fight, and showed the ability to take a shot. But he didn't do anything spectacularly. His performance was good enough to win a unanimous decision by scores of 120-108 and 117-111 (twice), but he didn't win himself many new fans.

"Forrest is a good fighter," said Hall of Fame trainer Emanuel Steward. "He may give a lot of guys a lot of problems, but he would have done himself a whole lot of good if he had been able to get Phillips out of there."

While he's never been beaten as a professional, Forrest's problem has been one of timing as much as anything. He hasn't performed his best when the spotlight was the hottest. Another of his problems is time itself. Of the top 10 welterweights in THE RING ratings, Forrest is older than all but Wilfredo Rivera and Ahmed Katejew. At 29, he's three years older than either De La Hoya and Trinidad. There is a perception of Forrest as a hot young prospect, but that is more because the public doesn't know much about him than anything else.

"Vernon, if he is going to make a move, he has to make it soon," said ESPN2 boxing analyst Teddy Atlas. "The longer he waits, the tougher it will be for him."

Forrest insists he isn't bothered by his predicament and that his time will come. Mosley promised to fight him, but that would be after a potential Mosley-De La Hoya bout, and thus, nothing is certain. Still, Forrest remains upbeat.

"If you keep winning, they'll know who you are," Forrest said. "I guarantee you this: If I have one bad performance, if I slip up and don't look so good one time, I'll have guys crawling all over each other trying to fight me. That's the way the game is. I understand that. I may not like it, but it's the way it is, and I have no choice to deal with it, so I'm dealing with it. I have a job to do, and I can't let myself forget about that. Doing the job in the ring is number one, and if I keep that frame of mind, I'll be all right."

Duva is perplexed by Forrest's situation and claims many of the contenders simply don't want to fight him. Before De La Hoya signed to fight Derrell Coley in his first bout since losing to Trinidad, he briefly considered Forrest as an opponent. But before that thought could gather momentum, it was quickly dispatched, and "The Golden Boy" settled on Coley. And while De La Hoya clearly knows of Forrest—they were 1992 Olympic teammates, remember—he had no idea of Coley's identity before signing to fight him.

Before a news conference to announce the De La Hoya-Coley bout, someone was relating to De La Hoya remarks Coley had made, in which he indicated De La Hoya was ducking him. De La Hoya was stunned by the charge and began to laugh.

"Ducking him! I don't even know who he is!" De La Hoya said.

Even so, he chose Coley for the bout instead of Forrest. "Oscar is a smart guy, and he got where he is by hiring good people and making smart choices," Forrest said. "I wish he would have said he wanted to fight me, because I would have gladly said yes. But I

(Continued on page 59)

ANALYZING THE ANALYST

Even TV Can't Tame TEDDY ATLAS!

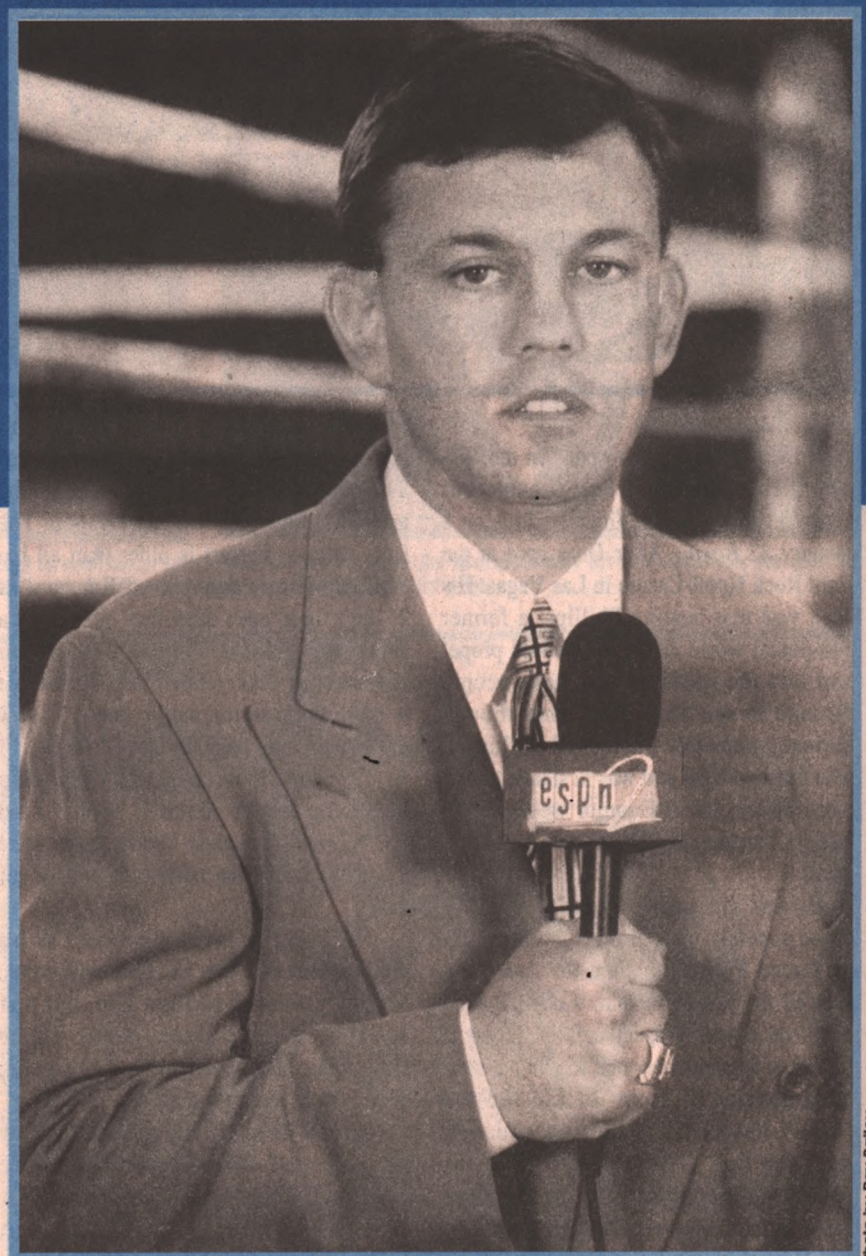


Photo by Ray Bailey

By Eric Raskin

"Listen, you punk. Monday came early."

For the average boxing fan, Friday is the night most closely associated with Teddy Atlas. But for Charles Jordan, the conditioning coach of heavyweight contender Kirk Johnson and the man toward whom the Dirty Harry-esque line was directed, it was on a Monday this past fall that he was counting on seeing Atlas. And it was on a Sunday night that he unexpectedly did.

If you didn't know anything about Atlas beyond his brilliant work as the color commentator on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, you'd never believe he's the kind of guy who'd go out of his way to track down a 220-pound muscleman and settle their dispute with his fists. And even if you had heard the stories about him putting a gun to a young Mike Tyson's head or getting in a streetfight as a teenager that left him with a permanent knife scar down the left side of his face, you still might have assumed that the highly professional, conservative-blazer-wearing Teddy Atlas you see every Friday night had outgrown his confrontational tendencies. But you'd have been wrong.

Atlas tells the story this way: He had been training Johnson for a little less than a year when he had to leave town for one of his usual Thursday-through-Saturday ESPN2 trips. Jordan, Atlas claims, let Johnson leave New York City and go

Photo by Ray Bailey

Atlas shares a laugh with broadcast partner Bob Papa at the Blue Horizon in Philadelphia during the very first episode of Friday Night Fights. *Atlas considers Papa "a real pro" and credits the blow-by-blow man for knowing how to set him up and make him look good.*

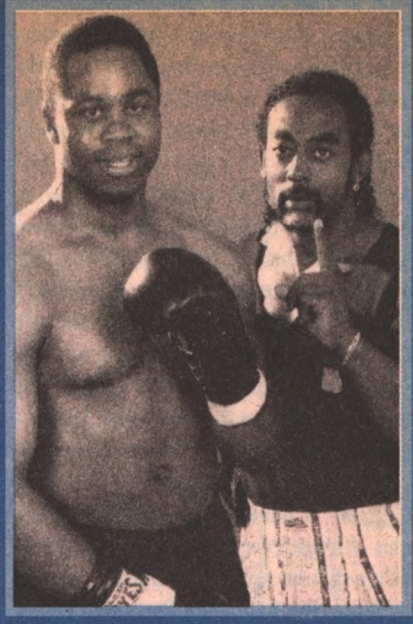


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Do these look like the kind of guys a 150-pound man should be messing with? Atlas got into brawls with both heavyweight contender Kirk Johnson and his conditioning coach, Charles Jordan, last fall. Needless to say, Atlas isn't training Johnson anymore.

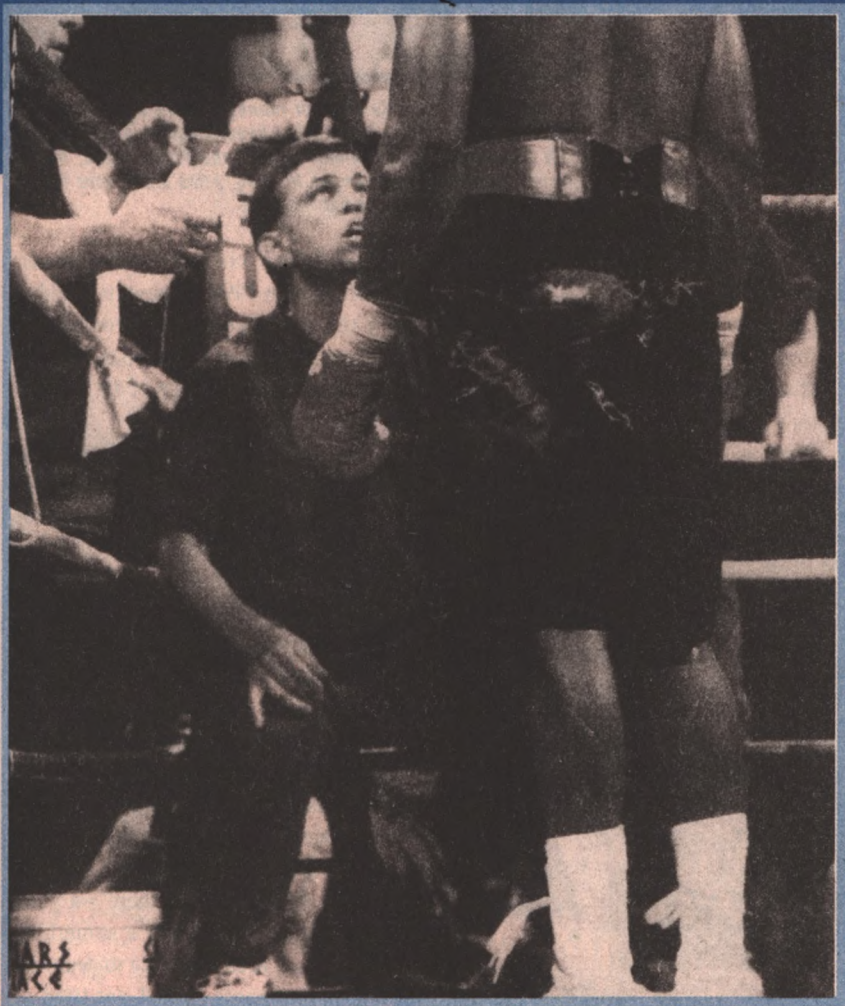


Photo by Tom Casino

One of Atlas' most memorable motivational stunts was when he sat on Michael Moorer's stool between the eighth and ninth rounds of Moorer's first fight with Evander Holyfield and told the heavyweight he was lying to himself if he thought he was doing enough to win.

home to Nova Scotia rather than continue to train in Atlas' absence. Atlas believes Jordan told Johnson that it was Atlas who said he could take the weekend off, and this alleged deception did not sit well with the Staten Island, New York-based trainer. When the accusations started flying, word got back to Atlas that Jordan would be waiting to have it out with him when Team Johnson returned to the gym that Monday. But Monday came early.

The 43-year-old Atlas, accompanied by two friends, confronted Jordan at his hotel, where it didn't take long for the fists to begin flying. And after it was over, Johnson again heard two different stories. Jordan's version had Atlas and his companions triple-teaming him, an allegation Atlas vehemently denies. So Atlas laid it out for Johnson simply. "If you don't believe me, and you believe him, get another trainer, because I can't train you if you don't believe me," Atlas told Johnson the next day. "I ask you to do things, I tell you to do things, and part of it is that you believe me. I cannot be a trainer of any value if you do not believe my integrity."

Johnson told Atlas he wanted to continue working with him, but after another week had passed, it was clear to both sides that it wasn't working out. When Johnson showed up late for a gym session the following Monday, that was the final straw. A yelling match turned into another street-fight. Atlas contends that, despite boasting an 80-pound weight advantage, Johnson resorted to biting him. Johnson doesn't deny that his teeth came into play, but asserts that Atlas repeatedly talked him into letting his guard down, then sucker-punched him.

"Teddy Atlas is nothing but a liar," said Johnson. "I have no respect for Teddy Atlas. Almost every day, he used to try to tell me that he never lies. But the kind of incidents that happened, between Teddy and my conditioning coach, that shows that he's nothing but a pure fraud. Teddy knows the truth. So if he wants to lie to try to make himself look good, that's his business. But it's like this: If you have 10 or 20 people talking the same about you, 10 or 20 people are not all lying about you. The whole 25 years that Teddy's been training fighters, you'll always hear of him doing something crazy to the fighters."

No matter whose side you believe with regard to the details, these fights with Johnson and Jordan did happen, and they cement Atlas' reputation as one of boxing's most compelling, unpredictable characters. It's a bit perplexing to picture *Friday Night Fights* Teddy and Sunday night attack Teddy being the same person, but his co-workers at ESPN2 stand by him without wavering.

"From what I know of the incidents, and what I know of Teddy, I would say Teddy was in the right every single time," said *Friday Night Fights* boxing consultant J Russell Peltz. "I don't know if I would have always gone about it the way Teddy did. But Teddy is Teddy, that's what he is. If he's with you, he's with you 100 percent. Teddy is the kind of guy you almost have to literally fight him for the check at dinner. I've seen him reach across the table, across the food, into someone's lap to get the check. That's the kind of guy he is. Teddy's a real man. Teddy's too real to make stuff up."

In fact, Atlas is so real and true to the things he believes in, he's passed up potential millions in training paydays because he's become fed up with the extracurricular hassles involved. He could have made $800,000 working motivationally challenged Michael Moorer's corner for his rematch with Evander Holyfield. He chose instead to walk away. Despite Shannon Briggs' obvious earning power, Atlas left him in 1996 because he couldn't stand the presence of the Brownsville heavyweight's posse of yes-men. Having been a trainer since the age of 19, Atlas is simply worn out.

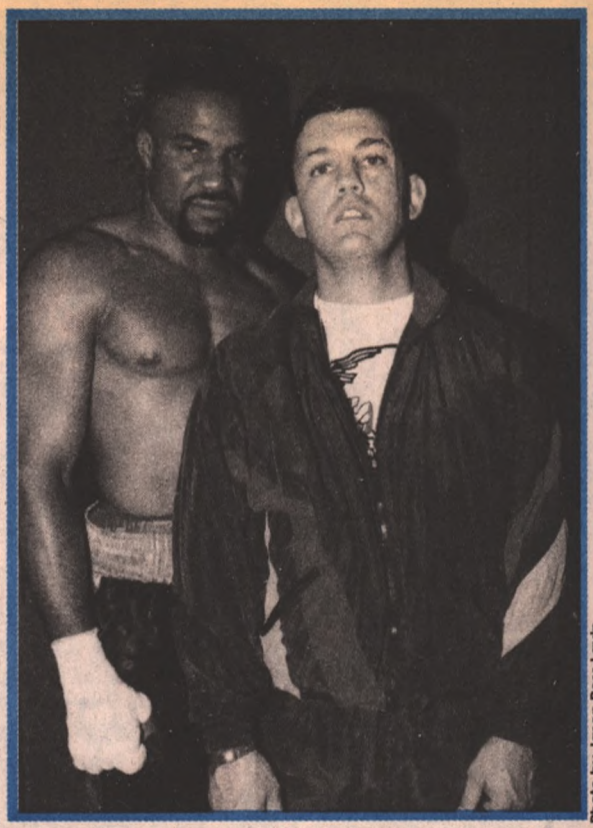


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Atlas could have made a lot of money had he stayed on with Shannon Briggs for the dreadlocked heavyweight's lucrative fights with George Foreman, Lennox Lewis, and Frans Botha, but he chose to part ways with Briggs in 1996. Atlas didn't care for the way Briggs' handlers were babying him.

"I was recently training Junior Jones to fight Naseem Hamed," Atlas said. "After watching the way I had the gym sessions set up, the manager said to me, 'Teddy, it would be a shame if you got out of this business.' For him to even say that, it isn't a reflection on me, it's a reflection that this business has no standards. Because if a simple thing like me running a day in the gym where there's no chaos, and there's only one person talking, and a fighter comes to the gym on time, and there aren't a whole bunch of people there just to tell the fighter what he wants to hear, and that makes the manager think there's a good thing going on, then there's something wrong. You get tired of having to deal with the disappointments. And I got tired of fighting for things that I felt should be automatic."

(Continued on page 61)

Photo by Brent Cook

You never know when Atlas' temper will flare. Moorer had to get between Atlas and George Foreman at a prefight press conference prior to Big George's 1994 bout with "Double M."

THE HONORS KEEP COMING!

LENNOX LEWIS

Receives The "Undisputed" *Ring* Belt

By Nigel Collins

Lennox Lewis sat on a couch sipping tea from a Styrofoam cup and looking through a stack of photographs of famous fighters wearing THE RING belt. Not long afterward, he would pose for this issue's cover photo wearing a belt similar to the ones in the pictures. It is a belt that has been emblematic of authentic championship credentials since Nat Fleischer presented the first of its kind to Jack Dempsey, and represents an unbroken chain of lineage that dates back to John L. Sullivan, the first heavyweight champion of the gloved era.

"My dream was to win all the belts, take them to a goldsmith, and have him melt them all down into one belt," said Lewis with a chuckle.

Symbolically, THE RING has done just that by awarding Lewis the first championship belt the publication has bestowed in 12 years. There was a time when RING belts were routinely handed out to world

Photo by Frank Vitucci

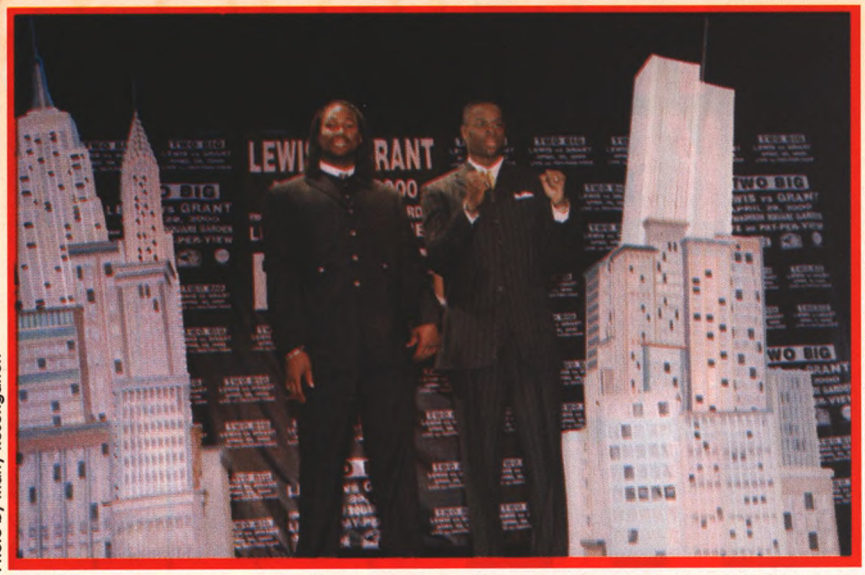


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

They're not quite as tall as the mock skyscrapers Madison Square Garden erected for its press conference announcing the upcoming Lewis-Grant fight, but at 6'5" (Lewis) and 6'7" (Grant), the twin heavyweight towers certainly live up to the "Two Big" name tag promoters have given the bout.

champions, but that was back in the days when there was only one champion per division. Thanks to the nefarious habits of the alphabet sanctioning bodies, the championship picture has become distressingly murky the last few decades, and as a result, clear-cut claims to titles have grown fewer and fewer.

Since 1988, RING belts have only been given to the Fighter of the Year and to whomever tops the magazine's pound-for-pound ratings. But now that the most prestigious prize in sports is unified once again, we felt it was important to bring back a time-honored tradition in order to emphasize the profound significance of the moment. It's a trend that we passionately hope will continue, and as other fighters join Lewis and Roy Jones, currently boxing's only other undisputed champion, additional belts will be awarded.

While Lewis became the unified champion by outpointing Evander Holyfield in their November '99 rematch, to purists, the Englishman was already the champ, having knocked out Shannon Briggs in March '98 to capture the linear title. This man-who-beat-the-man-who-beat-the-man philosophy is dear to the hearts of those who believe that titles should be won and lost in the ring and is the doctrine that held sway throughout most of boxing history. But regardless of what standard you adhere to, Lewis has finally emerged—after being the target of skepticism throughout most of his career—as the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world. Or in his words, "the last man standing." Now all that's left is to see how tall he walks in the footsteps of the giants of the ring who went before him.

The laid-back Englishman has never been the most popular of champions, and a large part of that has to do with his enigmatic personality. Perhaps it's his soft voice and British accent, or maybe it's his shoulder-length dreadlocks that sway gently every time he moves his head, but despite his formidable size, Lewis isn't a particularly menacing presence until he ducks between the ropes.

While some think he's aloof and others simply find him boring, one-on-one, Lewis is polite, intelligent, and easy-going, the sort of guy who would make a perfect next-door neighbor or brother-in-law. Of course, those qualities don't make him an ideal celebrity in this age of tabloid journalism and muckraking headlines. He's never been arrested, involved in a sex scandal, or accused of beating up a civilian. Compounding the situation, outside of a boxing context, he keeps a low profile. When not training or fighting in the United States, the naturally reserved Lewis spends much of his time at his Jamaican hideaway just outside of Montego Bay.

"I looked at Mike Tyson's life and other boxers out there, and their lives have been open books," said Lewis. "The British press and paparazzi are always trying to get me, but they can't because they don't know my movements. I understand that when you're a champion you have to open yourself a bit because people want to know about the person. I'm willing to give, but not everything. I'd rather just chill than be in the middle of everything. When people look for me, they won't see me where all the cameras are. They'll probably see me in the background, looking and watching."

The one place Lewis enjoys being the center of attention is in the boxing ring, but according to his trainer Emanuel Steward, we have yet to see the best of him, and his

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Lewis receives THE RING championship belt from Editor-in-Chief Nigel Collins at Madison Square Garden. It was the first championship belt the magazine has awarded in 12 years.

Lewis finally won universal recognition as the undisputed heavyweight champion with a 12-round decision over Evander Holyfield in November 1999 (above). But he captured the linear title by knocking out Shannon Briggs in March '98 (below).

prize pupil is capable of things he's only hinted at to so far.

"You know why Manny says that? Because he's seen me in the gym, and he knows what's in me," said Lewis. "But as far as making it come out in a fight, those things happen like that *(snaps his fingers)*, when God wishes them to happen. I'm gonna try and make it happen, but some boxers don't play to the part."

A lot of fans have grown weary waiting for Lewis to live up to Steward's expectations and deliver a career-defining fight. Perhaps Michael Grant will provide the catalyst.

"I don't like to say you will see the best of me against Michael Grant, because I can never know how a fight is going to go," said Lewis. "All I can tell you is that Grant has never seen nothing like me, hasn't been through what I've been through, and there's a good chance he's gonna get knocked out."

At the very least, Lewis should be credited for taking on a dangerous, undefeated challenger in the first defense of the undisputed title, April 29 at Madison Square Garden. He could have opted to placate one of the alphabet organizations by fighting an undeserving no-hoper such as Henry Akinwande or John Ruiz. But in typically understated style, Lewis doesn't seem to think of his selection of Grant, 31-0 (22), as being a particularly big deal.

"Who else is there to fight?" he asked with a modest shrug.

It has been suggested that Lewis' nonchalant attitude toward Grant is a direct result of sitting ringside last November and watching Andrew Golota, a man he'd dispatched in less than a round, come within a punch or two of ending Grant's title aspirations. Golota dropped Grant twice in the first round and generally had the better of things until his heart betrayed him in the 10th. But according to Lewis, he's had his eye on Grant longer than that.

"I thought boxing would bring me and Michael Grant together because HBO has been hyping him up so much," said Lewis. "I knew I had to watch him, peep him out, see what he's got. I saw Grant in the Lou Savarese fight, and I wasn't really impressed. Now I've seen the Golota fight, I'd say he's improved a little bit, although it might not have looked like it. But the problem with Grant is that he's never been through what I've been through. But I welcome this fight because it's the first time people will actually see me against a big guy. They've seen me against Henry Akinwande, but I mean a big guy who throws punches. They will actually see two good athletes. So I think it's a great fight in that sense."

Grant's backers like to claim that the 6'7", 250-pound contender beat a "better" Golota than the one who crumbled before Lewis' opening-round onslaught, and, somewhat surprisingly, Lewis agrees with them.

"I think he was a better Golota, because Golota didn't want to go out like that," said Lewis, referring to his uncompromising dominance of the unpredictable Pole in October '97. "You can lose to Lennox Lewis because you know he's been around for a while and he's been an Olympic champion. But when you go up against Grant, you say, 'Who is he? Where did he

(Continued on page 55)

THEY LOVED MIKE TYSON IN ENGLAND, BUT NOW ...

"I Have To Go Back Home To Be Treated Like A Monster"

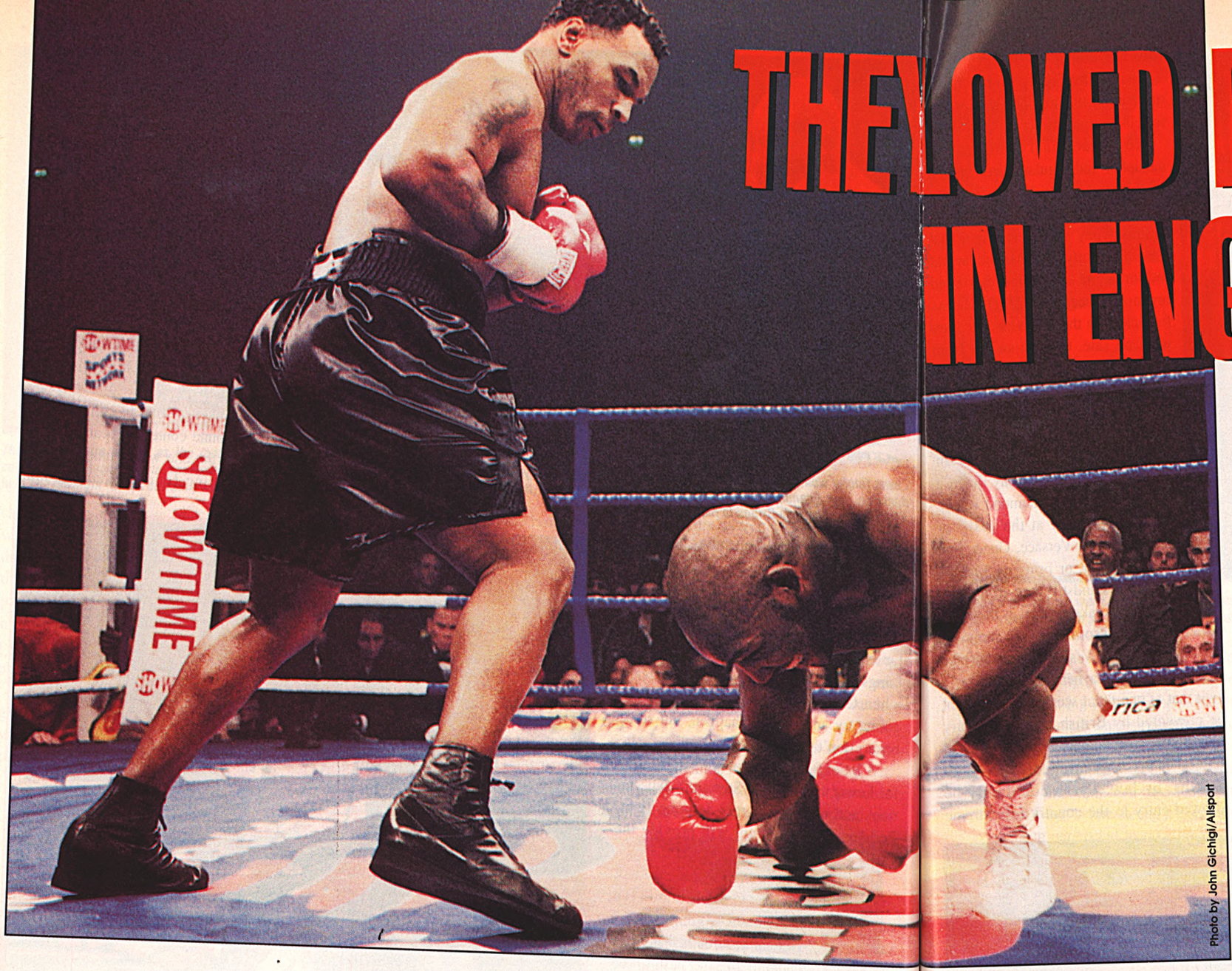


Photo by John Gichigi/Allsport

Tyson is escorted through London's Heathrow airport upon his arrival in England. Briefly, it looked like Tyson's criminal past would keep him out of the U.K., but the British government finally relented and allowed him to enter.

Photo by Ian Walton/Allsport

By Brian Doogan

Beneath the hype that transformed a mismatch into headline news in England—suggesting a gullibility among the great British public that could yield mindblowing profits for dragon-owners, dragon-slayers, and hucksters selling solutions that are not just revitalizing but immortalizing—lay a couple of simple truths about the turbulent boxing career of Mike Tyson.

His pulling power at the box office remains remarkably strong away from the American rings he has disgraced with cannibalistic and thuggish behavior—dining on Evander Holyfield's ears, locking Frans Botha's arm in a clinch that became a vice when he tried to break it, and decking Orlin Norris after the bell to end round one, when he might have been expected to do it legitimately. All 21,000 tickets at the Manchester Evening News Arena were sold inside two days, confirming the morbid fascination with Tyson's dark and unpredictable demons as well as the marketability overseas of a fighter whose terrorizing of the heavyweight division remains compellingly vivid in the memory.

But those once awesome powers have eroded irrevocably. Not even a second-round blowout of a carefully selected, limited opponent like British titleholder Julius Francis, beaten seven times before in 28 fights and sponsored for this one by a London newspaper that prudently stuck its logo on the soles of his white boots, could disguise the extent of Tyson's decline. This was no act of destruction to compare with the seismic ordeals experienced by Trevor Berbick, Pinklon Thomas, Tony Tubbs, and Michael Spinks. This was, as the veteran Mancunian fight manager Jack Trickett said it would be, "a two-hit fight. Tyson hits Francis. Francis hits the floor."

Five times that was just about how it happened before referee Roy Francis spread his arms to end a ritual akin to a bullfight, only the bulls in Barcelona's Plaza de Toros might have more chance of surviving than Francis did.

Bad intentions are an increasingly isolated link between the ferocious destroyer of the 1980s and the schizophrenic nomad of the new millennium. Jay Bright is another. Taken in by Cus D'Amato when

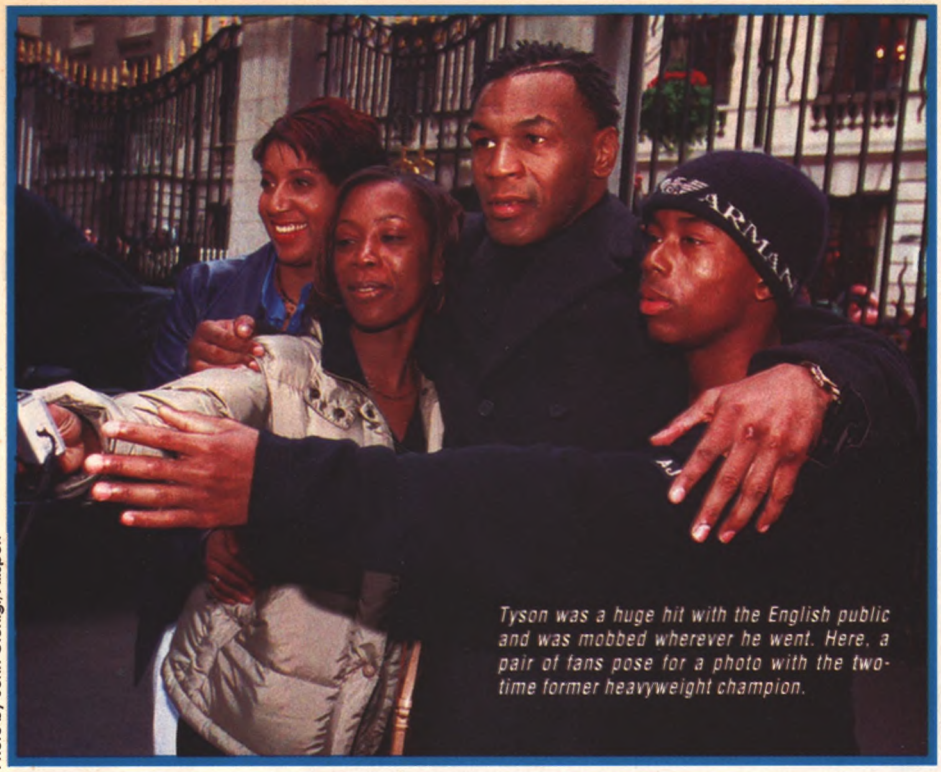


Photo by John Gichigi/Allsport

Tyson was a huge hit with the English public and was mobbed wherever he went. Here, a pair of fans pose for a photo with the two-time former heavyweight champion.

he and Tyson were teenagers, Bright is back as the former heavyweight champion's co-trainer, an alliance Teddy Atlas, another student of D'Amato and one-time Tyson trainer himself, disparagingly describes as "like wearing thongs under an Armani suit." On the eve of their departure from New York on board Concorde flight 002 to London Heathrow, where hundreds of fans greeted Tyson's entry to the country while ignoring completely fellow celebrity passengers Geri Halliwell, the former Spice Girl, and singer George Michael, the two close friends returned to the hideaway house in the Catskills they shared with Cus and their surrogate mother, Camille Ewald. When they left they took with them only positive thoughts.

"We had a meal and talked, and Camille, 95 years old in March, said she was so thrilled that Mike was getting this chance in Europe," revealed Bright, an apologist for Tyson's disturbingly self-destructive extracurricular antics, but at least genuinely affectionate toward a man a Las Vegas psychiatrist once said just needs to be loved. "It was a wonderful day. We went out to Cus' grave. Mike said a prayer over the gravestone, and we talked all the way back to New York about the days we spent with Cus and Camille and the trip we were about to embark on.

"That's the Mike I know. Everyone expects him to be throwing furniture out the window or chewing the legs off chairs like he's some sort of Hannibal Lecter. I guess the serenity of that visit doesn't fit into the contrived image. Mike Tyson as the raging monster is a more colorful metaphor with which to sell newspapers."

To extraordinary lengths, the metaphor and regular manifestation of this metaphor did much more than boost newspaper circulation figures. They sold a non-fight that drew a capacity crowd to the largest indoor arena in Europe, besieged organizers receiving 52,000 requests for tickets in the 48 hours after they went on sale. Quite a switch from Tyson's recent fights in Las Vegas, where tickets had to be given away.

Whether jostling through hysteric crowds at Heathrow Airport, stopping at jewellers Graff in London's West End to lay down a million bucks for a diamond watch, spending lavishly at the designer fashion houses Versace, Gucci, and Ralph Lauren, or bringing Brixton to such a standstill that, ironically, he was forced to take refuge in the local police station, Tysonmania ran rampant. Radio shows and TV shows were devoted to discussing the mayhem and validity of a visit that at one point seemed like it might be prevented by British Home Secretary Jack Straw. As a convicted rapist who had served a prison sentence of over 12 months, by law, Tyson could only be allowed entry to the country for extreme

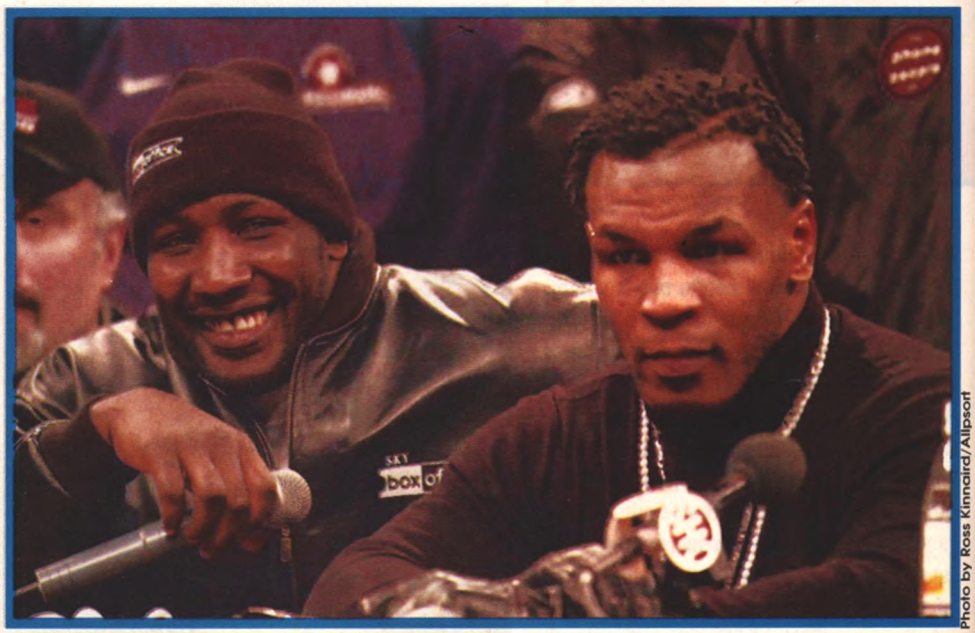


Photo by Ross Kinnaird/Allsport

British champion Francis was having the time of his life until the opening bell rang. Even so, he earned the biggest purse of his career and also sold advertising space on the sole of his boxing boots.

Photo by John Gichigi/Allsport

Tyson's bodyshots were particularly effective against Francis, who said that he was surprised by the power Tyson generated with short punches on the inside. "All those punches hurt me," said the loser.

compassionate reasons. Compassion was never likely to figure highly on his list of reasons for visiting Julius Francis, but the British government unsurprisingly relented.

Predictably, women's groups attempted to intervene, one taking their case all the way to the High Court before having it dismissed. Having been persuaded to take his circus elsewhere by commissioners in Nevada, disturbed by the sustained and serious transgressions in his three previous bouts there, Tyson's British expedition needed to be successful. Comment pieces describing him as "London's most shameful tourist" hit newsstands, and *The Express* summed it up thus: "Repellent spectacle, foul man, despicable entourage, sick insult, revolting quagmire of shame." But not even Tyson's most optimistic associates could dare have hoped that their fortnight in Britain would be quite as auspicious as it turned out.

"I found the experience of being with him enlightening," said promoter Frank Warren, whose satisfaction will no doubt have been multiplied by the chagrin he will have caused former partner Don King by promoting the electrified one's foremost ex-meal ticket. "He is brutally honest, says how it is, no guard. He's probably too honest for his own good.

"Like he says, he was abused all his life for God knows how long, and that has had an obvious impact. I got the impression he is trying to learn how to like himself, rather than hate who he is. One incident, for me, sticks out. A little girl came with her father to say hello to Mike. She had a birthmark on one side of her face, and when she went over and said, 'Hello, Mr. Tyson,' he signed an autograph for her, bent down, and kissed her on the cheek, the good side. Almost immediately, he realized what he had done. So he bent down again and kissed her on the side bearing the birthmark. If that's not sensitivity, I don't know what is."

In public pronouncements, Tyson oscillated between decorous and disdainful. To world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis he was merely delusional.

"I love London. I really would like to live here," Tyson said. "I get respected here in a way that never happens at home. Women are as pleased to see me as men. Over there [in America] everybody who comes up to me is simply money-hungry. It's just a rat race. I know what I am—a nigger. But why should I put up at home with being treated like a nigger? People should be able to do whatever they want to do. But after being treated so good here, I have to go back home to be treated like a monster.

"America is not sophisticated enough to deal with the sensitivity of human life. England is different. I would like to have all my fights here from now on, including getting my titles back from your Lennox Lewis. If I hadn't got into trouble and been sent away, you would never have heard of guys like Evander Holyfield and Lewis. I would have gutted them like fish."

Tyson declared that as teenagers sparring in the Catskills, he had knocked Lewis out of the ring, an interpretation the champion strongly disputed.

"Either he has a poor grasp of reality or I hit him harder than I recall. That simply never happened," said Lewis, who attended the Super Bowl in Atlanta in preference to what he termed the "freak show" in Manchester. "I would love to fight Mike Tyson, and I would beat him. I have even extended my boxing career so that I can finish in two or three fights against Tyson. That would be a suitable climax, although I'm not sure that Tyson will ever get back to his best. All the signs are that we have seen the best of him, and that was some time ago."

Initial signs of a Lewis-Tyson collision in the near future, after Francis had been summarily dispatched, were not good. Jay Larkin, vice president of Showtime Television, Tyson's paymasters, insisted that having acquiesced to the wishes of Holyfield and released him to fight Lewis twice on HBO, to whom the 34-year-old Londoner is still contracted for four more fights, there was no way Showtime would relent a third time.

"The obstacles in the way of Tyson-Lewis are astronomical," Larkin said. "I don't foresee it happening."

But HBO supremo Seth Abraham subsequently suggested there is room for compromise.

"At this moment, we and Lennox want to focus our attention on April 29 and the Michael Grant fight," Abraham stated.

"But as soon as it is over, we will sit down and thrash out his best options."

His best option in relation to Tyson would be to get to him as soon as he can. The life expectancy of a ring ogre is never long. Sonny Liston and George Foreman were both exposed by the genius of Muhammad Ali far earlier than any contemporary observer predicted. Tyson was found out by a considerably inferior nemesis in Buster Douglas and survives 10 years on because of enforced inactivity through incarceration and the cynical exploitation of his dark side that arouses man's most base instincts. He fights men like Francis because of the fragility of his battered psyche. If he were to meet opponents with more class, there is every chance he would lose.

The power with which Tyson has disposed early of 41 of his 51 opponents was never harnessed against Francis in a way that could make anyone other than his overwhelmed victim shudder. Badly timed punches repeatedly missed a target that, at 244 pounds, could hardly be described as minuscule (Tyson poked fun at his "flabby" adversary at the weigh-in). The bodyshots, however, were killers, and from the moment Francis felt their brutal force, his aspirations were reduced solely to finding a soft place on which he could safely land.

A hard right uppercut to the jaw precipitated his demise, flooring him for a count of nine. Tyson, 223¾, seemed to be going through the motions when a short straight left prompted a second visit to the canvas by Francis at the bell. Not without some deliberation, the Londoner arose, which meant that Tyson was unable to settle it with a quick, clean kayo inside a round.

There was nothing quick and clean about the three knockdowns in the second, either. A left hook to the body caused the first fall, and a couple of right uppercuts that looked suspiciously sustainable resulted in falls two and three. The crowd in the packed auditorium acclaimed the climax less enthusiastically than they had Tyson's entrance, but the lack of disapproval emphasized that they had known what to expect.

"He is back to 75 percent of the full Tyson, and that's better than 100 percent for almost every other heavyweight," declared Larkin, an assessment that seemed only slightly less flawed than the soothsayers who deemed the Titanic impregnable.

Be still my heart: Tyson finally gets through a fight with no controversy. Next up for Tyson will probably be Lou Savarese, maybe in Milan, Italy. There has also been talk of a bout with Axel Schulz in Germany.

Photo by John Gichigi/Allsport

Tyson was honest enough.

"I am constantly trying to do better and further cultivate my skills," he said. "There is some way to go yet. I'm not doing as well as I would like and I will have to have a few more fights, but when I do I will be ready to challenge Lennox Lewis—and I will be victorious."

Distinctly unimpressed was undefeated Ukrainian heavyweight Vitaly Klitschko.

"What could be learned from this? Tyson was punching a human heavybag," Klitschko accused. "In the 1980s, he was very impressive and still is a reasonably good fighter, but the main thing he has left is his name. I am ready for Tyson or Lewis, but Tyson would be easier."

The party back at the Midland Crown Plaza went on till 5 a.m. before Tyson and his entourage took their leave. In compliance to the conditions laid down by immigration officials, he flew back later in the day, destination Phoenix. Someone suggested this was appropriate, as his performance in England, in the ring and out, further underlines his continued rise from the ashes. A more realistic conclusion is that Mike Tyson and his career in boxing are one step closer to the dust he came from. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING'S European correspondent.

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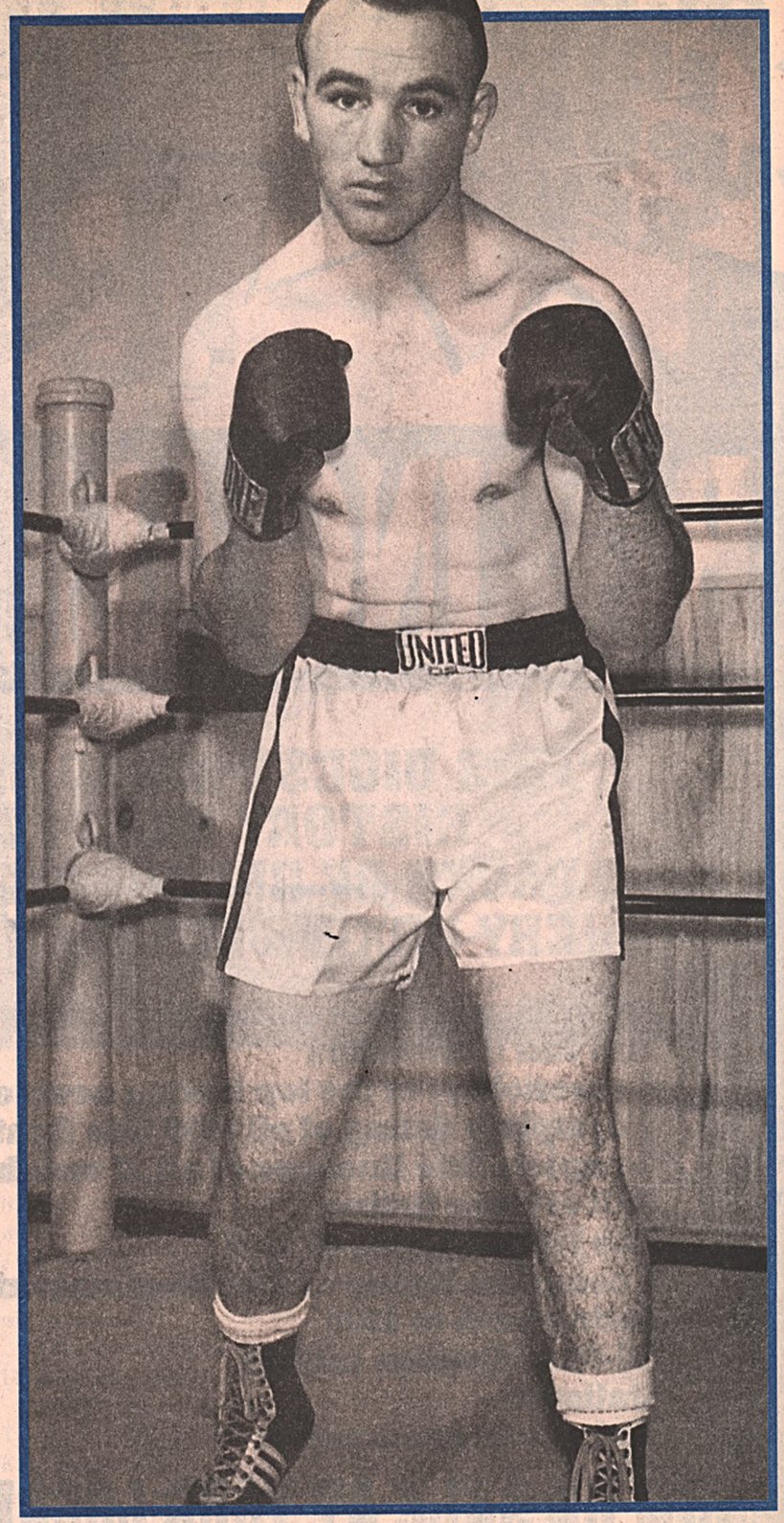
'60s MIDDLEWEIGHT DON FULLMER

He Didn't Quite Have Gene's Genes



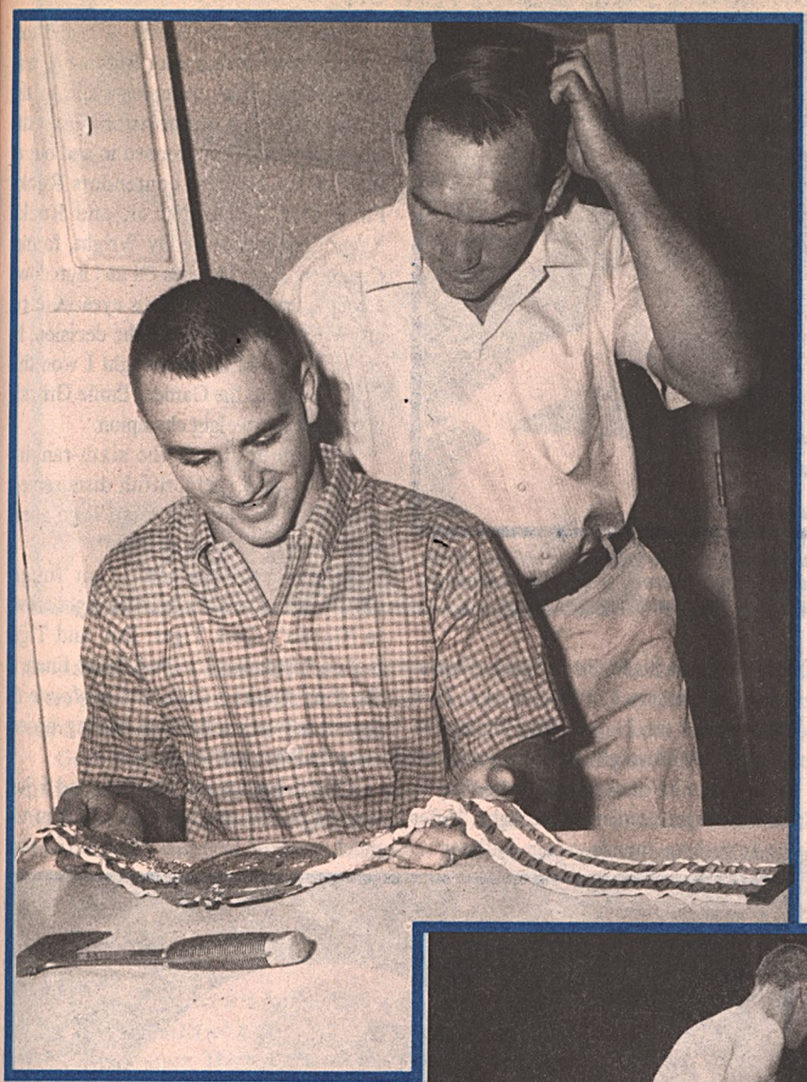
By Pete Ehrmann

Last November, Don Fullmer followed his brother Gene into the Utah Sports Hall of Fame. Three decades earlier, Don almost joined Gene in an even more elite group when he knocked down Nino Benvenuti in their middleweight title fight. But Benvenuti got up and, with an assist from the Hong Kong flu, kept Don from becoming the second member of his family to win the 160-pound championship of the world.

Eight years Don's senior, Gene wore the middleweight belt twice, in 1957 and from '59-'62. Don was merely a ranked contender through most of the '60s. That wasn't the only difference between them.

"Gene was more of a mauler-brawler type," said Don, now 60. "I think I was a little more of a boxer."

"He didn't have quite the desire I had," said 68-year-old Gene, "but basically everything else I had was there. His attitude probably wasn't the same as mine. His aggressiveness was lacking a bit, probably."



Don admires his brother Gene's RING *championship belt, while the Hall of Fame middleweight champ looks over his shoulder. Though Don was a top contender through nearly the entire decade of the '60s, he was never able to join his older brother as a world champion.*

Or, as Marv Jensen, who managed both of them, put it, "Gene was out to kill 'em and murder 'em, no ifs, ands, or buts. Don was out there just to win."

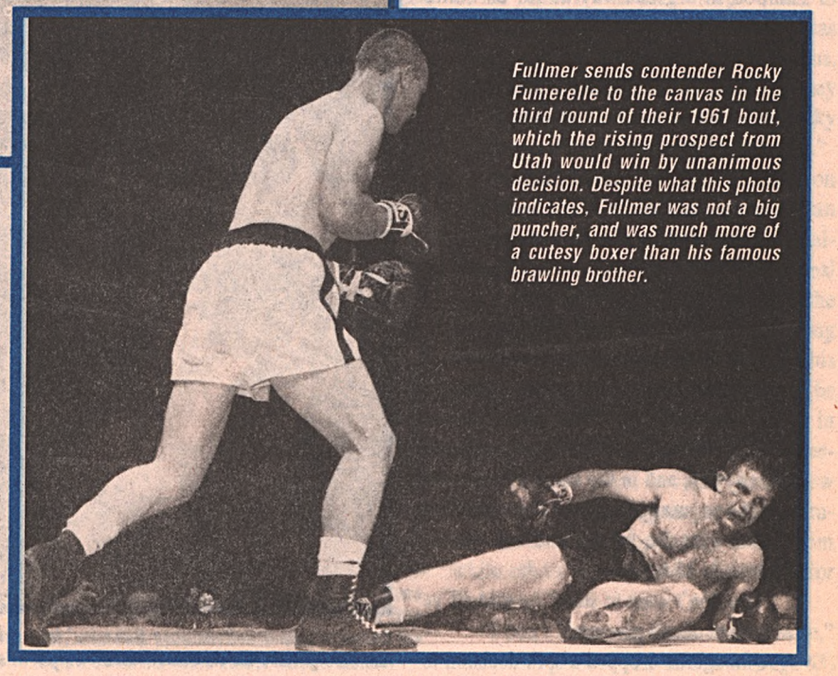
A lot of Gene's approach came from their dad, Lawrence, who was known as "Tuf" and, according to Jensen, was built like Mickey Walker. He was such a fight fan that he named his first-born son after former heavyweight champion Gene Tunney.

Don doesn't know who he was named after, but when he was five or six years old, it was his turn to follow Gene into Jensen's boxing gym in West Jordan, outside of Salt Lake City. Don and the middle Fullmer brother, Jay, who was two years older than him, were about the same size, and "Dad used to make us put the gloves on and beat the crap out of one another," Don recalled.

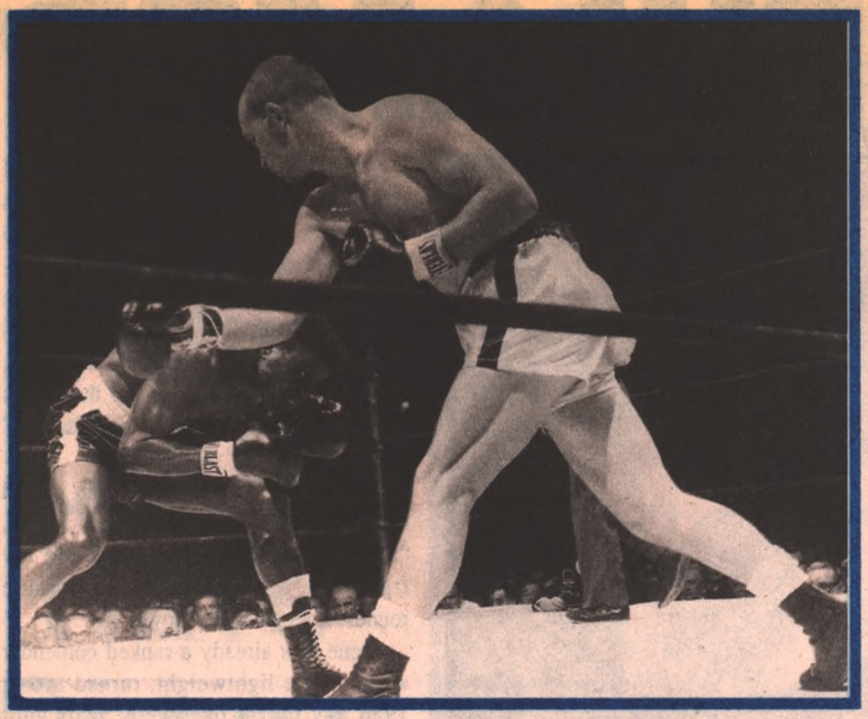
"When the University of Utah played basketball at the Fieldhouse," said Jensen, "at half-time they'd have Don and Jay fight each other for three one-minute rounds. They stole the show."

Gene was already a ranked contender when Jay, a lightweight, turned pro in 1956. Jay fought for several years until forced into retirement by an eye injury. "He was a great fighter," Jensen said, "but he had a detached retina. If not for that, he would have won the championship. He was a great boxer and counterpuncher."

An amateur for 12 years and undefeated in 65 fights, in 1957 Don decided, "If I'm going to turn pro, I may as well do it now before I lose some." That was the year Gene won the middleweight title for the first time. There was never any jealousy



Fullmer sends contender Rocky Fumerelle to the canvas in the third round of their 1961 bout, which the rising prospect from Utah would win by unanimous decision. Despite what this photo indicates, Fullmer was not a big puncher, and was much more of a cutesy boxer than his famous brawling brother.



Fullmer misses with a right against then-welterweight champion and future Hall of Famer Emile Griffith. Griffith beat the larger Fullmer so handily that he predicted he could move up and win the middleweight title—which he eventually did—but he actually lost to Fullmer in a rematch three years later.

between the boxing brothers.

"I thought it was pretty neat," Don said about having an older brother who was champion of the world. "Gene always done pretty well. You always look up to your big brother. I was pretty excited about that."

Being the sibling of a famous fighter "helped in a great way as far as being known a little bit more," he said. "But it hurt in a lot of ways, too."

"I think Don really done pretty well in the situation he was in," Gene said. "There was lots of pressure on him, me being his brother and a champion. I think he probably wanted to live up to the same thing I was doing, and he did do that. He fought nine world champions, which tells you he sure knew how to fight."

He had the trademark Fullmer toughness, too. While sparring in preparation for his first 10-rounder, against Orlando DePietro on April 4, 1959, Don cracked his collarbone. He went ahead with the fight anyway, and in the second round, the collarbone snapped clear through. But Fullmer went the full 10 and lost for the first time in 18 bouts.

"You don't want to stop," he said. "I've never been one to give up."

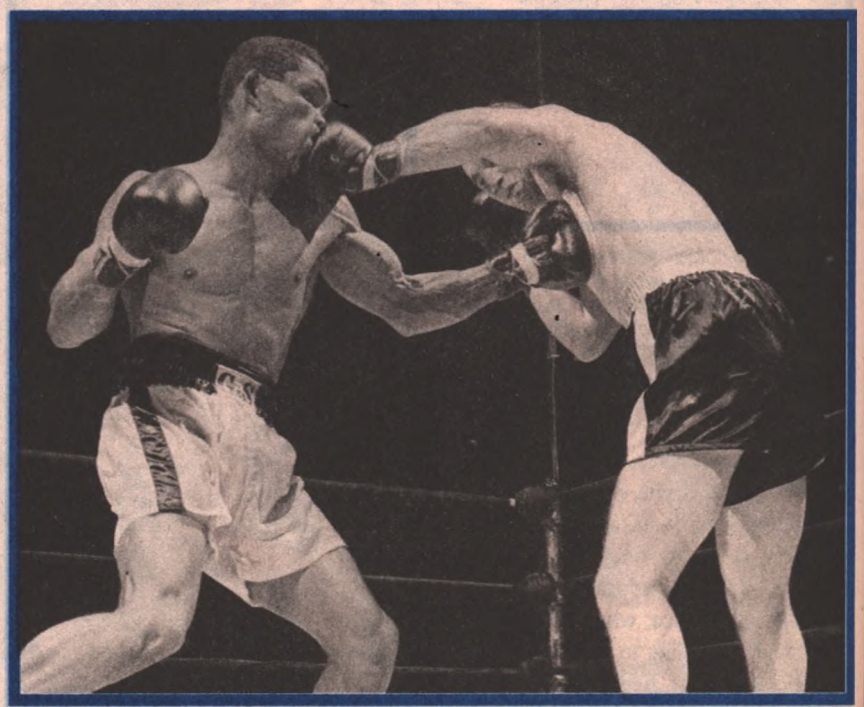
Although he dropped a split decision to Joey Archer in his Madison Square Garden debut on February 4, 1961, the *New York Times* called the 21-year-old Fullmer "an artistic middleweight [who] ingratiated himself to a lot of skeptics." According to the newspaper account of the fight, "After the first three rounds, when Fullmer ... stung his foe with crisp rights and sharp left hooks, a fellow near ringside said: 'Say, this kid doesn't fight like his brother.'"

Gene, who'd previously won and lost the title from Sugar Ray Robinson, was then recognized as champion again by the National Boxing Association. Over the next few years, Don dropped in and out of the top 10. He beat contenders Rocky Fumerelle, Joe DeNucci, and Rocky Rivero, but lost to Teddy Wright, former champion Terry Downes ("I had him down a couple times, and both his eyes were cut up. When they announced the decision, he got it. But I definitely thought I won that fight."), and, at the Garden, Emile Griffith, then the welterweight champion.

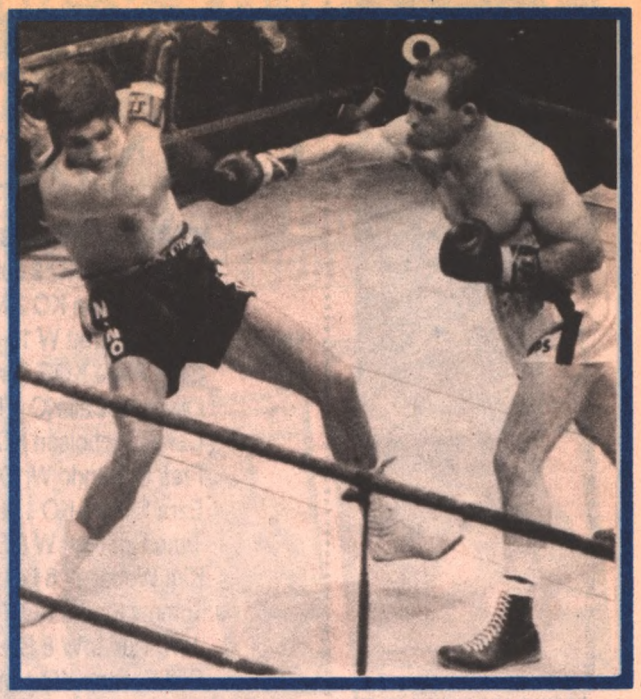
"If Don Fullmer's the sixth-ranking middleweight," said Griffith dismissively after the fight, "then I guess I'll go ahead and try to get a shot at the title."

Seventeen days after Don fought Griffith, Gene lost the middleweight crown to Nigeria's Dick Tiger. Don and Tiger met on September 11, 1964, in the finale to the long-running *Gillette Cavalcade Of Sports* network television boxing broadcasts. Fullmer lost the decision.

"He'd beaten my brother, and I just kinda felt like maybe I showed him too much respect," Don said. "Maybe if I went



Crunch! Fullmer flattens Jose Gonzalez' face with a stiff left in their 1966 bout. Fullmer, then 26, lost the fight and the American middleweight title by unanimous decision.



The most frustrating losses of Fullmer's career were his two fights with Italian Nino Benvenuti. In their second fight, despite a battle with the Hong Kong flu, Fullmer knocked Benvenuti down in round seven (above), but couldn't put him away to capture the middleweight crown.

in and pushed him more, if I'd put a little more pressure on him, I might've won that fight. I had too much respect for the guy."

Gene may have been the only world titleholder in the family, but only Don can boast that he beat a heavyweight champion—although when he decisioned Jimmy Ellis a month after the Tiger fight, Ellis was a middleweight and three years away from winning the WBA version of the heavyweight title.

But it was a good win for Fullmer, and it marked the start of a major surge forward in his career. The next year saw him avenge his losses to Griffith and Archer in 12-round bouts. The American middleweight title came with the victory over Griffith, along with a large cup that Fullmer would have gladly traded for a shield or a bat to use in the ring with Benvenuti in their first fight, a 10-rounder in Rome on February 4, 1966.

Not that he needed them against the future champion, who, although he won the decision, "had a difficult time against the faster Fullmer," according to the *Times* report, and needed 27 stitches in his face afterward. Fullmer himself doesn't hesitate to declare, "I thought I won that fight."

But he had three opponents that day. In addition to Benvenuti, there were the referee and the crowd. The former stopped the action to warn Fullmer about some ostensible infraction of the rules "every time I hit Benvenuti a good shot," Fullmer recalled. "I think I was warned more times than in my whole career. I should've learned the language, as much as he talked to me. This guy was unreal."

Fullmer with his wife, Nedra, and the first three of their five sons, Larry (top right), Brad (top left), and Troy (bottom) in the '60s. It seems the boys went to the same barber as their dad.

As for the fight fans in Rome, the devoutly Mormon Fullmer suspects they "thought they were feeding Christians to the lions again. They pack sack lunches, and what they don't eat, they throw. An orange hit me in the stomach in the middle of the fight. It was kinda tough trying to beat Benvenuti and dodge fruit and pizzas at the same time. They just bombarded us, and when I walked out of the ring, they really unloaded on me. I was pretty lucky to get out of there. It was quite an ordeal."

When they met again for the title on December 14, 1968, the crowd at San Remo was more civil, but for the challenger, there was a whole different ordeal that began more than a week before the fight when Fullmer caught the Hong Kong flu, then raging across the U.S., from his kids. Already sick when he left Utah, he was bed-ridden for his first three days in Italy. A postponement was out of the question, Fullmer says, because who knew when or if he would again get the opportunity he feels was repeatedly denied him while others ranked lower challenged for the title.

"I don't know, maybe it was my style,"

(Continued on page 63)

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Mike Tyson KO 2 Julius Francis
Kirk Johnson KO 2 Marcus Johnson
Monte Barrett W 10 Derrick Banks
Greg Page KO 7 Terrance Lewis
Oliver McCall KO 1 Ric Lainhart
Danell Nicholson KO 2 Tony LaRosa
Fres Oquendo W 10 Dale Crowe
Ezra Sellers KO 1 Nestor Giovanni
Timo Hoffman W 8 Everett Martin
Kim Weber W 8 Lorenzo Boyd
Tommy Martin KO 3 James Flowers
Jovo Pudar W 8 Ron McCarthy
Cliff Etienne KO 1 Marvin Hunt

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Vassiliy Jirov KO 9 Saul Montana
(Retains IBF Title)
Wayne Braithwaite KO 9 Dale Brown
Terry Ray W 12 Rod Bensonhaver
Ian Koulkov W 12 Sergei Korolev
John Kiser KO 1 Andrew Maynard
Earl Morais KO 8 Melusi Khoza
Jacqui Frazier-Lyde KO 1 Teela Reese

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Clinton Woods W 12 Nelongo Perez
Lincoln Carter KO 3 Ali Sanchez
Jean-Marc Mormeck KO 4 Rob Bleakley
Robert Koon KO 5 Chris Mills

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Markus Beyer KO 7 Leif Keiski
(Retains WBC Title)
Joe Calzaghe W 12 David Starie
Syd Vanderpool W 10 Glen Johnson
Ryan Rhodes KO 5 Eddie Haley
Vitaly Kopitko KO 7 Terry Ford
Gabriel Hernandez W 8 Derrick Whitley
Pat Coleman W 6 Cirilo Nino

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Hassine Cherifi W 8 Viktor Fessechtko
Stephane Ouellet KO 6 Wayne Harris
Julio Garcia W 10 Eric Holland
Freeman Barr W 12 Gerald Coleman
Shakir Ashanti KO 3 Saoul Mamby
Cleveland Corder KO 2 David Ojeda

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Hercules Kyvelos W 12 Fitz Vanderpool
Evans Ashira KO 7 Darren Maciunski
Roman Karmazin KO 2 Anthony Fields
Alex Bunema W 10 J.C. Candello
Joya Kawai W 10 Toshiharu Kaneyama
Anthony Farnell KO 4 Ian Toby

WELTERWEIGHTS
Shannan Taylor KO 4 Gary Murray
Michel Trabant W 12 Michail Bojarski
Carlos Rubio W 12 Horatio Garcia
Scott Dixon W 12 Sean Sullivan
Darren Bruce KO 5 Michael Smyth
Alexandre Vetoux KO 1 Henry Hughes
Curtis Barker KO 4 Mike Rios
John Molnar W 6 Kevin Carter

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Kostya Tszyu KO 8 Ahmed Santos
(Retains WBC Title)
Zab Judah KO 4 Jan Bergman
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Antonio Diaz KO 8 James Crayton
Hector Camacho Jr. KO 1 Harold Warren
Ricky Hatton KO 3 Leoncio Garces
Allan Vester D 8 Nasser Athuman
Michael Stewart W 8 Damian Brazoban

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Julien Lorcy W 12 Oscar Garcia-Cano
Jean-Baptiste Mendy D 10 Djamel Lifa
Tracy Patterson W 8 Adam Salas
Bruno Wartelle KO 2 Petre Gigel
Julio Diaz W 4 Jose Manjarrez

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Jongkwon Baek D 12 Kyuchul Choi
(Retains WBA Title)
Lakva Sim KO 2 Sangsun Park
Carlos Navarro KO 2 Javier Lucas
Sirimongkol Singmanasuk KO 3
Jongjong Abao
Anatoly Alexandrov KO 4 Kamel Ikane
Lemuel Nelson W 12 Ariel Nistal
Jorge Barrios KO 5 Sergio Liendo
Mzonke Fana W 12 Irvin Buhlalu
Kengo Nagashima KO 5
Frangky Mamuaya
Tetsuya Shinozaki W 10 Hiroto Oguchi
Kinji Amano W 10 Hidekazu Matsunobu

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Fred Norwood KO 9 Takashi Koshimoto
(Retains WBA Title)
Augie Sanchez KO 5 Didier Schaeffer

Carlos Rios W 12 Esteban Morales
Israel Vazquez W 10 Hector Velazquez
Juan Polo-Perez D 12 Manuel Calvo
Marcos Licona KO 3 Augustin Lorenzo
Bobby Velardez W 10
Armando Contreras
Michael Gomez KO 3 Chris Jickells

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
Nestor Garza KO 6 Hugo Torres
(Non-Title Bout)
Yobert Ortega W 12 Vladislav Antonov
Michael Alldis W 12 Shaun Anderson
Manabu Fukushima W 10
Yutaka Manabe
Emanuel Lucero KO 2 Damian Sutton

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Veerapol Sahaprom KO 8
Nathan Barcelona
(Non-Title Bout)

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
Yokthai Sithoar KO 4 Agus Ekajaya
Saen Sor Ploenchit KO 4 Joseph Baden
Samson Toyota-Thailand KO 1
Jinho Lee
Eric Morel W 8 Tomas Rivera
Xolani Ndleleni W 12 Nkosana Vaaltein

FLYWEIGHTS
Sornpichai Singwangcha KO 3
Archie Villamor
(Non-Title Bout)
David Guerault KO 1 Jesus Garcia
Damaen Kelly W 12
Alexander Mahmutov
Mike Trejo W 12 Oscar Arciniega
Jair Jimenez KO 2 Jose Lopez Bueno

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS
Pichit C. Siriwat W 12 Sangik Yang
(Retains WBA Title)
Saman Sorjaturong KO 3
Rogelio Lapian
Pongsaklek Nakorntorn-Parkview KO 2
Aamando Rosil
Keitaro Hoshino W 10
Keisuke Yokoyama

STRAWWEIGHTS
Jose Antonio Aguirre W 12
Wandee Singwangcha
(Wins WBC Title)

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Despite being the undefeated two-time WBA featherweight champion, Norwood went to Japan in January with a lot to prove. His last two fights, his foul-filled recapturing of the WBA crown from Antonio Cermeno last May and his uninspired, questionable decision win against Juan Manuel Marquez in September, were two of the most fan-unfriendly fights of '99. "Li'l Hagler" needed to generate a li'l excitement, so he went to the scene of his only professional trip-up, the country where his first title reign ended when he weighed in 1¾ pounds over the featherweight limit in October '98, and scored a spectacular kayo.

Photo by Chris Farina

Previously unbeaten Takashi Koshimoto put forth a determined effort, but Norwood, who on his best nights posts a legitimate claim to being the finest 126-pounder in the world, was on top of his game. In the ninth round, three left crosses hit the point of Koshimoto's chin in succession, sending him violently to the canvas, where the Japanese challenger remained for 10 minutes. Norwood, as always, called out "The Princess," Naseem Hamed, afterward, and on the heels of a performance like this, Freddie looks ready to give Naz all he can handle.

• • • •

Fred Norwood

Tszyu rips into Santos en route to successful defense

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Kostya Tszyu KO 8 Ahmed Santos

Uncasville, Connecticut: In his second world title reign, the thick-trunked, pony-tailed, Tszyu, 140, Australia via Russia, made his first defense of the WBC super lightweight title by stopping the game but limited Santos, 139, Mexico, 36 seconds into the eighth round at the Mohegan Sun Casino. In light of the savage beating Tszyu, 30, inflicted on Miguel Angel Gonzalez to win the vacant crown last summer, most observers were shocked that the 25-year-old challenger was able to last as long as he did. Although Tszyu looked extremely fit, he was not nearly as ferocious as he was in his spellbinding title-winning effort.

Even though Santos, 25-3-4 (13), was able to withstand numerous right hands and left uppercuts to the head, there was never any doubt that Tszyu's vaunted power would finally take its toll. The challenger managed to answer several of Tszyu's attacks with right hands of his own, but he lacked the power to slow down the intense, hard-charging Russian. Santos was finally dropped by a right uppercut early in the eighth round. Up at eight, he was met with a barrage of right hands. As Santos turned away from one such punch, his face contorted in pain, Tszyu, 24-1-1 (20), blasted him with two more rights to the back of the head. When Santos hit the deck again, referee Frank Cappuccino (USA) didn't even bother to count before calling a halt to the one-sided beating. The challenger's corner protested that the final two punches were fouls, but their cries were met by deaf ears. Judges Henry Elesperu (USA) and Dick Flaherty (USA) had the fight scored 69-64 for Tszyu, while Tom Kaczmarek (USA) had the champion pitching a 70-63 shutout at the time of the stoppage.

"When I hit him with a hard right, he moved his head, and I had to hit something," said the jubilant winner, who is expected to next fight mandatory challenger Julio Cesar Chavez. "It is hard to stop yourself in the excitement of the moment."

Should Tszyu beat Chavez, which is generally believed to be a foregone conclusion, a unification fight with Zab Judah, who won the IBF title in the co-feature against Jan Bergman, looms large. Because Judah hails from New York City, which has an immense Russian population, a Madison Square Garden matchup would be a blockbuster.

"Tonight's fight was just another springboard for Kostya," said Tsyzu's promoter, Vlad Warton. "We haven't even seen the best of him yet. He tried a lot of new things with Santos, and we're thrilled with the outcome. As popular as Kostya is already, it is nothing compared to the superstar he will become."

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Millennium Events, in conjunction with Cedric Kushner Promotions and Bernie Dillon Promotions

(2-12-00)

Robert Mladinich

Zab Judah KO 4 Jan Bergman

Uncasville, Connecticut: After dropping Bergman twice in the first round, the unbeaten southpaw Judah, 138½, Brooklyn, New York, survived a shocking second-round knockdown and went on to stop the valiant but outgunned Bergman, 138¾, South Africa, with a barrage of punches at 2:40 of the fourth round at the Mohegan Sun Casino. Judah won the IBF junior welterweight title that had been ordered vacated from Terronn Millett because of a hand injury that precluded Millett from defending the title in timely fashion. Judah must now face Millett in his first defense.

Because of the immense amount of prefight hoopla accorded the 22-year-old Judah, his crowning seemed more like a coronation than anything else. At the forefront of his publicity machine was ESPN2 analyst Max Kellerman, who had been touting him for months on the *Friday Night Fights* and was in attendance for the stellar victory.

Because he is perceived by many as a Pernell Whitaker clone with power, nobody was all that surprised when Judah, 22-0 (17) with one no-contest, nearly finished matters in the first round. Although Bergman was wide-eyed with shock and perhaps even

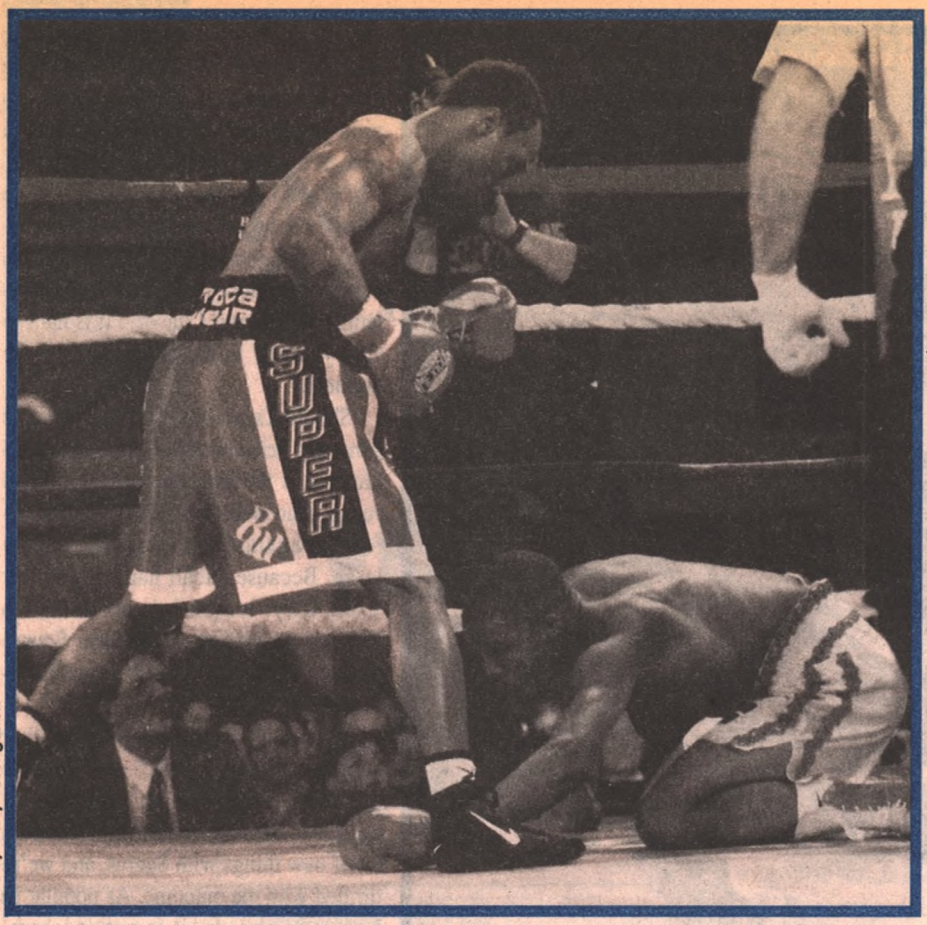


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Bergman crumbled under Judah's onslaught

fear after he was dropped first by a grazing left and then by a thudding left to the temple in the opening stanza, he refused to surrender his will to the rampaging Judah. When he landed a desperation left hook and knocked Judah down midway through the second, a collective gasp was heard throughout the arena. The silly smirk Judah wore when he got up did not fool anybody. He was hurt. When he insisted later that he was neither hurt nor scared, one of his cornermen, Lou Duva, interrupted by saying, "I was scared."

The only thing that precluded the remainder of the fight from being a dogfight was the 29-year-old Bergman's lack of genuine knockout power. Judah laid into Bergman, 38-3 (29), with one two-fisted flurry after another, finally dropping him in a heap in a neutral corner where referee Steve Smoger (USA) counted him out. It didn't take the cocky, loquacious Judah long to declare himself one of the best fighters in the world.

"I belong on the [best] pound-for-pound lists," he railed. "Bergman leaned in on me and just seemed so fragile. At this weight, there is nobody stronger than me. I'll beat Tszyu and anybody else here, then move up to 147 pounds. The difference between Tszyu and me is like a Toyota and a Benz. He's the best and I'm the best, so let's get together and see who's really the best. Tomorrow wouldn't be soon enough."

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Millennium Events, in conjunction with Cedric Kushner Promotions and Bernie Dillon Promotions

(2-12-00)

Robert Mladinich

Fred Norwood KO 9 Takashi Koshimoto

Fukuoka, Japan: Unbeaten St. Louis, Missouri, lefty Norwood, 125½, proved too strong for Japanese southpaw Koshimoto, 125¾, and retained the WBA featherweight title on a spectacular kayo at 1:59 of the ninth round at Fukuoka International Center. Norwood, making his second defense since regaining the title he was stripped of for failing to make weight the last time he fought in Japan, landed an explosive left cross that made Koshimoto fall face-first. Referee Julio Cesar Alvarado (Panama) tolled the 10-count.

Koshimoto, standing seven inches taller than the 5'3" champ, utilized his footwork all the way to avert Norwood's aggression, but failed to win a point. From the moment Norwood, 29, caught his lanky foe with a big overhand left about a minute into the fight, Koshimoto, 29, was convinced to go on the defensive, and Norwood maintained the pressure with jabs and left crosses.

Aware that he was well behind on points (only one judge had given Koshimoto a single round), Koshimoto came out fighting in the ninth, but the champ responded to his rallies with more accurate and powerful shots to the chin. Norwood's left cross hit the mark three times, and the last one was so devastating that Koshimoto, 23-1-2 (13), fell flat in much the same way that Zora Folley did against Muhammad Ali.

"I'll prove I am the best 126-pounder in the world," the jubilant Norwood, 36-0-1 (21), said afterward. "I want to beat all other organizations' champs and defeat Prince Naseem Hamed."

The dejected Koshimoto, the son of the fight's promoter, said, "The champ was strong, so I couldn't catch him. I'll make a comeback."

Promoter: Hidetake Koshimoto's Fukuma Sports Promotions in association with Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions

(1-30-00)

Joe Koizumi

Shane Mosley KO 3 Willy Wise

Las Vegas, Nevada: The type across the front of Wise's trunks said "Slick," but after his brief stint with Mosley, it probably would have been better to say "Sick." Mosley waltzed to his 34th win without a loss and his 32nd knockout by completely outclassing Wise in the main event of an HBO *Boxing After Dark* card at the Hard Rock Hotel.

It was target practice from start to finish for Mosley, 148, Pomona, California, who was clearly far stronger than Wise and took quick advantage. Wise, 148, Westbury, New York, was pop-

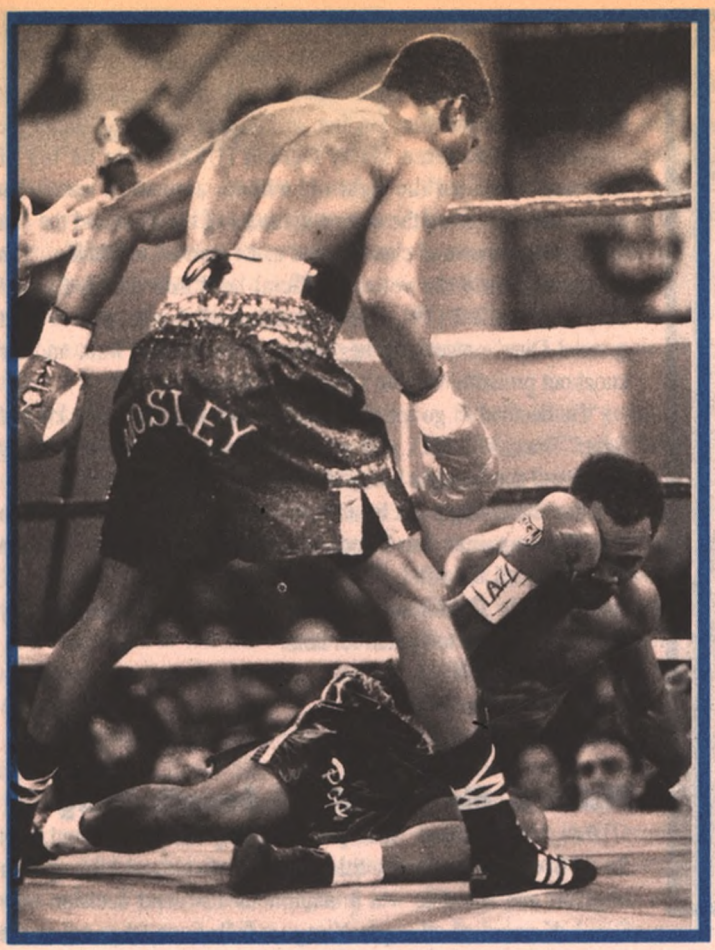


Photo by Greg Cava/HBO

Mosley makes quick work of Wise

ping up and down from the canvas like a blow-up toy, hitting the floor nearly every time Mosley made solid contact. There were only two official knockdowns, but Wise was visiting the canvas so often he probably should have been checked for rug burns. It was just Mosley's second welterweight fight after moving up from lightweight, and he put on a show for the crowd in his first fight in Las Vegas.

"I wanted to look good in this fight," said Mosley, the former IBF lightweight champion. "He was scared of my punching power, so I had to make a decision to go after him."

That he did. Mosley rained punches down upon Wise from start to finish and, according to the CompuBox statistics, landed nearly as many punches as Wise threw. Mosley connected on 77 of 124 punches, most of which were powershots, while Wise landed just 13 of 80 punches.

The 32-year-old Wise only pawed at Mosley and never landed anything of significance. He wasn't strong enough to keep Mosley off, and his movement, supposedly his strength, was limited after he took a sharp left hook to the ribs early in the first round. Wise, though, said his problems began with a headbutt and said that was the reason for the stoppage.

"He's a great fighter and a strong puncher," Wise, 24-7-4 (4), said. "But punches didn't knock me out. A headbutt knocked me out, and he knows it."

A left hook late in the first round sent Wise down in a heap, but he managed to survive and make it to the second. The second was a repeat of the first, except that Mosley had two points deducted by referee Mitch Halpern (USA) for hitting on the break. As Halpern was coming between the fighters to pry them apart, Mosley let go of a left that went under Halpern's arm and hit Wise on the chin, putting him down. It cost Mosley two points, but there wasn't one person among the 1,700 in attendance who felt the deduction would have an impact.

Mosley, 28, made it academic in the third. He was pummeling Wise with a series of strong shots, before flooring him with a left hook. Halpern had seen enough and didn't bother to count, stopping the fight at the 2:28 mark.

Promoter: Cedric Kushner Productions

(1-22-00)

Kevin Iole

Markus Beyer KO 7 Leif Keiski

Riesa, Germany: Not even Angelo Dundee in his corner could help Swedish-born Keiski, 166¼, Miami, Florida, prize the WBC super middleweight title from Beyer, 167, Germany, before 7,000 fans at a packed Sachsen Halle. The German was dominant throughout and stopped the Swede in the seventh to complete a comfortable first defense of the title he claimed from Richie Woodhall last October.

The left hand that felled Britain's Woodhall several times in Beyer's title-winning clash was again a convincing weapon. Keiski's input was negligible because of it. Constantly on the back foot, he never got into the fight, his challenge dissipating like a damp squib. Beyer's absolute grip on the fight proved very little. Keiski was simply out of his depth.

The southpaw champion first floored his challenger in the second and meted out more of his medicine in the fourth. Both times, the left hand did the damage. The 28-year-old German might have brought a swifter climax, but failed to raise the pace sufficiently to avoid Keiski, 28, surviving into the fifth round.

Encouraged by Beyer's failure to finish him when given the chance, Keiski came on and did enough to win round five, but there was never any chance of much more than a temporary revival. Two rounds later, Beyer, 18-0 (8), who had worked the body effectively, finished his man emphatically with a left to the liver. Keiski, 27-2 (19), collapsed, his body bent over and his head touching the canvas. Referee Jay Nady (USA) completed the formality of counting him out.

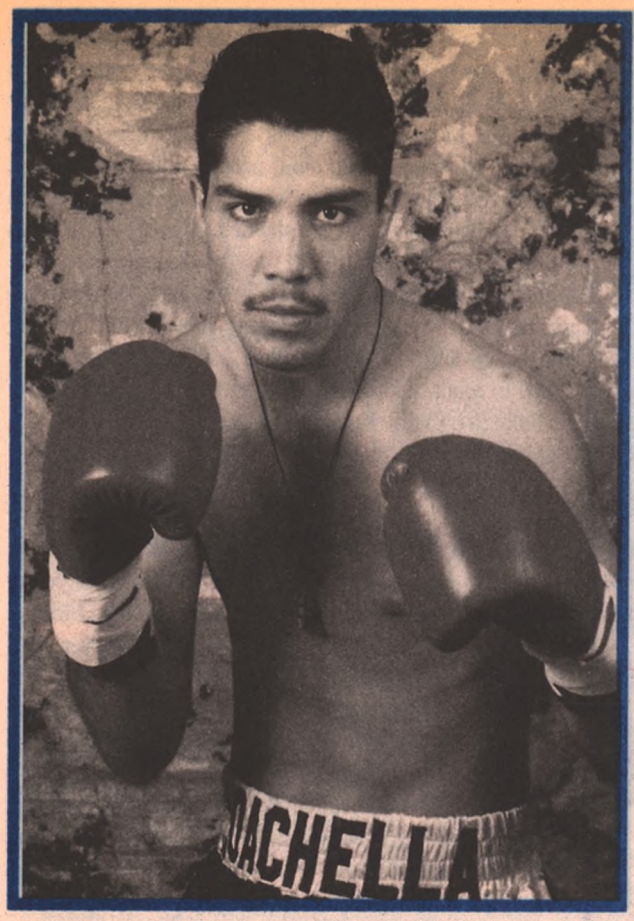
"I took too many unnecessary shots and at times was rather slow with my counterpunching," said the perfectionist German. His next challenger will be mandatory contender Glenn Catley. The Briton, who dropped a controversial decision to Woodhall in a previous tilt at this title, was at ringside, and his manager, Chris Sanigar, insisted they were unimpressed.

"He hits hard and fast with the left hand, straight through the middle," Sanigar said. "He also works the body well. But Glenn fancies the job. He's already sparring southpaws to get himself ready." The bout is likely to be in Leipzig, Germany, in May.

Promoter: Wilfried Sauerland

(1-29-00)

Brian Doogan



Another impressive kayo for Diaz

Antonio Diaz KO 8 James Crayton

Indio, California: No junior welterweight in the world has beaten more quality opponents over the last three years than Diaz, who ran his winning streak to 22 by adding Crayton to a list that already included Ahmed Santos, Hector Quiroz, Cory Spinks, Mauro Lucero, Marlon Thomas, Emanuel Burton, and Terrell Finger. But as has been the case in most of those fights, Diaz had his share of difficulty with the smooth veteran Crayton before breaking through with a vicious right hand to the jaw that ended matters at 2:58 of round eight.

Fighting in front of an almost-hometown crowd at the Fantasy Springs Casino, Diaz, 139, Coachella, California, took the first two rounds by landing the more effective shots, despite being less active and being clearly outjabbed. An eight-punch flurry along the ropes, including a couple of perfect bodyshots to each side, clinched the opening stanza for the 23-year-old favorite, and another onslaught over the final 20 seconds stole round two from the jabbing and circling Crayton, 140, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Crayton held his own in the third and fourth, but it was tough to give him a round until the fifth, when he turned to a potent body attack. Crayton, 30, easily won round six behind some beautiful triple jabs and slick defensive movement, while Diaz, seemingly wary of being countered, was hesitant to open up and appeared to have lost any momentum he was building in the early rounds.

Diaz took over again in the seventh, though, by pumping out a solid jab and eventually rattling Crayton with an excellent right uppercut. But Crayton was game, and the action was continuing to escalate in the eighth before Diaz struck with a left-right-left combination, followed by a short counter right, and the explosive right to the jaw that put Crayton flat on his back, his head under the bottom rope. Referee Marty Denkin (USA) leapt on top of Crayton and called the fight off without a count, a somewhat quick stoppage given the competitiveness of the fight and the fact that Crayton appeared clear-headed as he insisted to Denkin, "I'm all right," while the veteran official held him down. Even if Crayton, 31-12-2 (19), had been allowed to rise, however, it seemed Diaz' power was beginning to overwhelm him, and the knockout probably wouldn't have been far off.

"He decided to go toe-to-toe at the end, and that's my kind of fight," Diaz, 30-2 (21), said a few minutes later. "It was a strong right hand that I caught him with. My hand still hurts now."

Diaz' hand might not be all that's hurting if he gets his wish, a title fight against murderous-punching WBC champ Kostya Tszyu. For all the solid, "B"-level fighters Diaz has disposed of, most gave the Californian enough trouble to suggest an "A" guy like Tszyu will be too much for him.

Television: ESPN2
Promoter: Top Rank
(2-4-00)

Pichit C. Siriwat W 12 Sangik Yang

Bangkok, Thailand: Slick-punching lefty Pichit, Thailand, kept the WBA light flyweight title when he displayed his superior ringcraft and speed to win a unanimous 12-round decision over South Korean challenger Yang, a fellow southpaw, at the Convention Hall of the Mall Shopping Center at Bangkapi. Coming off of an inactive stretch of nearly a full year, Pichit utilized his defensive skill to nullify the aggression of the challenger, and occasionally scored with light but fast combinations to pile up points steadily.

Yang, 19-7 (13), kept boring in, but his punches hit only the air, as Pichit, 22-1 (13), outmaneuvered the taller man. The only round Yang, 28, won clearly was the seventh, when he significantly upped his punch output. But the 25-year-old Pichit, making his fifth defense, promptly regained control with his more accurate combinations, all the while making the pugnacious Yang flail and miss his shots.

The judges all scored in favor of the Thailander, though the margins varied somewhat. Takeshi Shimakawa (Japan) had it 120-110, Takeo Harada (Japan) saw it 118-111, and Silvestre Abainza (Philippines) scored it much closer at 115-113. It seems Abainza might have evaluated Yang's aggressiveness a bit too much without appreciating Pichit's Pernell Whitaker-like style. The referee was Derek Milham (Australia).

A side note: Some call the champ Pichitnoi, but "noi" means "small" or "younger" in the Thai language. When his elder brother, former IBF flyweight champ Pichit Sithbangprachan, was active, the younger brother fought under the name of Pichitnoi. But since his brother hung up the gloves for good, he has been fighting as Pichit.

Promoter: Songchai Ratanasuban's Songchai Promoitons
(2-5-00)
Joe Koizumi ■

Lennox Lewis

(Continued from page 37)

come from?' You can't be that scared of him, so you go after him and try to take him out. With me, Golota knew what was coming, and had to be more careful."

Lewis said this with a casual confidence born of success. And when you inspect his resume and see what he's accomplished—an Olympic gold medal (won by stopping Riddick Bowe in the finals), a 35-1-1 (27) professional record that includes victories over Razor Ruddock, Frank Bruno, Ray Mercer, Oliver McCall (to avenge his lone loss), Briggs, Golota, and Holyfield—you realize he has every right to feel the way he does. Still, there's always the hazard of being overconfident.

Despite a reported purse of $10-million for the Grant fight, Lewis also seems to be in peril of looking past his immediate task to an even bigger payday looming on the horizon. Although Lewis was "on the beach" when Tyson invaded England in January, the ex-champ's ability to sell tickets in the U.K. didn't escape the reigning monarch's notice.

"What people really want to see is me fight Tyson," said Lewis. "That's where the money is at. Boxing used to be a sport to me; now it's a business. So I want to go out there, and not only make my mark on history, but also make my mark as a good businessman as well."

Lewis also understands that part of being a good businessman is giving your customers what they want, and recognizes that he hasn't always done that.

"People may have seen the second Holyfield fight, and said that it was dull or whatever, although I won, which is the main point," he said. "But you're only as good as your last fight. The key is to keep going so that the people see more of me and see that I have an arsenal of real good punches that I can throw at any given moment. Then they will start to appreciate me more and more."

Whether intended or not, fighting Grant in his first defense of the undisputed title is a positive step toward solidifying Lewis' appeal with the paying public. Sure, there's more money to be made fighting Tyson because of the huge crossover appeal the match would have with casual fans. But to those who follow the Sweet Science closely, it's obvious that Grant presents a far more arduous assignment than Tyson does at this point of his career. In fact, Grant just might turn out to be Lewis' toughest opponent to date. He isn't small and past his prime like Holyfield and Tyson, paralyzed by fear like Akinwande, or an emotional cripple like McCall and Golota.

"That's what's going to make it a great fight," agreed Lewis. "It's better to fight a guy who's fighting back than a guy who's trying to dance with you. But now that the fans are seeing me against guys they respect, guys like Evander Holyfield and Grant, that leaves the hype behind. Because it wasn't hype that made me."

That's true enough. Talent, not hype, has taken Lewis to the top. He got there the hard way, overcoming ambushes by the alphabet boys, spineless snubs by both Bowe and Tyson while they held titles, and a frequently indifferent public. Nonetheless, regardless of what happens in the Grant fight, Lewis has earned the right to be included among the pantheon of legitimate heavyweight champions—and now he has the belt to prove it. ■

New Faces

(Continued from page 18)

with him. What would he do? Fight naked? When the purse offer swelled to $28,000, Garcia committed—at 4:15 p.m. The fight was scheduled to begin at 5:30.

Then above all of that, Garcia did the inconceivable—he won and gained instant credibility in Southern California boxing circles. The fact is, the impromptu bout only served to reveal a rising talent. Garcia, 22-1-1 (5), now has a minor title belt hanging in his home, courtesy of his 12-round unanimous decision over Lopez on December 18.

"Only God knows why He wanted me to be there," said Garcia. "Nothing like this has ever happened to me before. I feel blessed. I really had no intention of fighting. I was sitting down in the hotel lobby, drinking a soda, and then my trainer came up and told me he wanted me to fight for the title. I asked him when, thinking it could be sometime in the future. Then Javier told me no and that it would be tonight.

"I kept saying 'No, I wasn't in shape, I wasn't training well.' I just went to the gym that week. I ran that morning. But I didn't want to fight. The money convinced me to do it. I never received that kind of payday before. I felt weird because I was dressed and ready to fight, but I couldn't believe it."

Garcia borrowed everything from shoes to trunks to a protective cup. His mouthpiece was an extra he grabbed from *his opponent*. Things were done so rapidly, the mouthpiece was dipped into a steaming cup of coffee to soften it enough to mold to Garcia's teeth properly. There was, however, one, final unexpected problem: Garcia hates coffee because it makes him nauseous.

Oh, yeah, one more minor detail: Garcia was 123 pounds, 11 pounds over the flyweight limit. But as it turned out, the weight was not an issue. Lopez had ballooned to 122 pounds since the weigh-in the day before, and since the fighters' weights were comparable, the contract was finalized and the fight sanctioned by the California State Athletic Commission.

So wearing someone else's shoes, trunks, and athletic supporter, Garcia stepped into the ring, but not before making a personal pact with himself.

"Isidro told me he would see how he felt and that if he didn't feel right after a couple of rounds, then he was going to let Lopez knock him out," Angelica said. "When he first called me about this, I thought he was playing. I didn't believe him. I told him no, I wasn't crazy about the idea. I knew he wasn't prepared. I thought he would get hurt, and he did, too. In fact, Isidro thought he was going to lose, and he had it written into his contract that if he lost, he would get a rematch. He called my mother's house to tell me he won. When I heard, I didn't believe it, then he passed me along to one of his corner people, and he told me Isidro won."

Garcia fought masterfully. Going into the bout with nothing to lose nor anything to prove, Garcia paced himself like

(Continued on page 58)

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New Faces

(Continued from page 55)

a seasoned veteran over 12 rounds. By the third round, Garcia felt in control. He began to fatigue in the seventh and eighth rounds, then found a second wind to finish strong.

"I didn't have a plan; my trainer just told me to figure the other guy out," Garcia said. "I didn't know anything about the guy."

Watching this unfold at home was Gerry Bilderrain, the matchmaker for club shows held at the Irvine Marriott Hotel. Garcia had fought on a couple of Bilderrain's cards in the beginning of his pro career, and the matchmaker had kept track of Garcia's progress. In his last three or four outings, Bilderrain noticed tremendous improvement.

"I've noticed things about Garcia that I didn't see before; he's able to slip punches, counter beautifully," Bilderrain said. "The other thing about him is that he's extremely focused. Being in less than 100 percent condition and able to beat the caliber of fighter that he did shows he's able to think in the ring. He's able to pace himself well in order to reserve what he actually had. He fought a completely smart fight and just outfoxed the guy.

"His defensive improvement is the biggest difference. He didn't get hit in that title fight. He was rolling with punches. This all comes from a fighter using all of his smarts to the hilt. The only drawback in 'Chino' Garcia's arsenal is his lack of punching power. People say they can make a puncher out of a non-puncher. Maybe you can get a guy to sit down more on his punches to make it sting, but that's it. You can't make a puncher; a puncher is born."

Another telling sign Bilderrain noticed was how remarkably cool Garcia seemed to be. Even under the best of circumstances, prefight jitters can cause a fighter to come unraveled before he steps in the ring. But Garcia, even with all the handicaps he was saddled with, walked in cool, calm, and collected. More importantly, he maintained his emotional equilibrium throughout the bout.

"There were a whole lot of people, and I'm talking about the boxing community, that praised Chino," Bilderrain said. "It was the way Isidro handled it that was so impressive. He walked into that ring like he owned this guy. When the camera focused on his face, I saw an expression that said, *I'm here and I'm going to take him.* I commend his corner and his manager, Frank Espinoza. He's an astute manager and he displayed his intelligence by going through with this thing. I think this victory is a big step for Garcia."

About a month after the Lopez fight, Garcia finally received his title belt.

"I didn't believe I did it until I got my belt," said a still incredulous Garcia. ■

Roy Jones

(Continued from page 27)

Patterson, and Muhammad Ali, the triumphant kayo of Yvon Durelle. What do these bouts have in common? They each took place after Moore was 40. Can you imagine how good he must have been when he was 28? Or even 35? How good was Moore that he all but shut out Joey Maxim to win the title when he was 39? How good do you have to be to take out the talented Harold Johnson when you're 41? Too good to lose to Roy Jones.

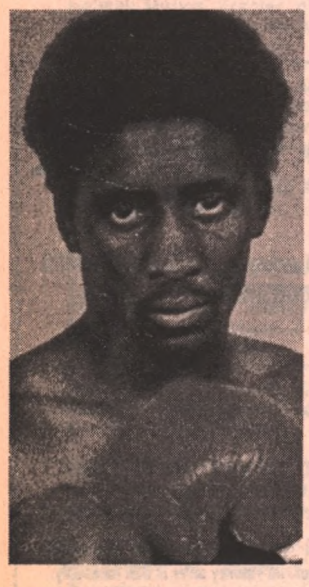
Despite scoring more knockouts than any fighter in history, Moore, who also had plenty of success at heavyweight, was not a banger in the traditional sense. He wore down opponents with subtle body work and short, hard punches inside, and with smarts. And when they were ready to go, he exploded, and out they went. He'd have some trouble early with Jones' speed and he'd probably visit the canvas. But he'd work, and tinker, and chop away inside until he had Jones where he wanted him. Then he'd take him. Moore by late kayo.

BILLY CONN

Record: 63-12-1 (14)

World Title: Light Heavyweight (1939-'41)

Of the light heavyweights on this list, Conn, a natural 168-172-pounder, is the closest to Jones in size. That gives Jones



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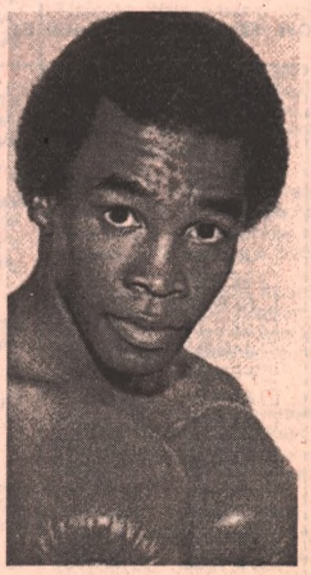

an advantage he wouldn't enjoy against other 175-pound notables, but the significance is promptly nullified by the inevitable tradeoff: speed. Conn was among the most mobile and quick-fisted light heavyweights ever, and his speed allowed him to compete favorably with heavyweights who outweighed him by 20 or 30 pounds. Was he as fast as Jones? No. Was he as powerful? No again. But he was fast enough and smart enough to beat some of the best light heavies of the 1930s and '40s and a fair amount of heavyweights, too.

Jones would recognize the physical advantages he held over Conn and go right after him. Conn, of course, liked nothing better than when a bigger puncher came to him, and every time Jones would lead, Conn would spear him with jabs and hooks. He'd tie up Jones inside, run when he had to, and steer Jones into combinations he wouldn't expect. His chin would hold up, and so would his legs. Conn by close decision.

BOB FOSTER

Record: 56-8-1 (46)

World Title: Light Heavyweight (1968-'74)

It's true that Foster could not handle heavyweights, and we're not just talking about Hall of Famers. Ernie Terrell stopped him. So did Doug Jones. Zora Folley, too. Of course, Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier blew him out. But against light heavyweights, Foster was a deadly and awesome presence and he would have been against Jones, too. At 6'3", he'd have towered over Jones, and with the hand speed of a middleweight, would have very nearly matched Jones' quickness.

Clearly, Jones' best chance against Foster would be to stay outside and outbox him and stay out of the corners. But Foster's reach was considerable, and he'd use it to jab and time Jones for his bombs. It would take a while, and Jones would hold his own early, getting in, landing, and getting out before Foster could get adjusted to his speed. But he'd adjust eventually. Sooner or later, he'd time Jones and drop a hook right in the middle of one of those lightning fast but sloppy combinations Jones likes to throw. And the ref would count all the way to 10. Foster in eight.

HAROLD JOHNSON

Record: 76-11 (32)

World Title: Light Heavyweight (1962-'63)

The late, great Teddy Brenner was once asked why he never put Johnson in a nationally televised fight. The man considered the best matchmaker ever replied, "Harold Johnson represents perfection in the ring, and there is no room in this world for perfection." What else do you need to know about the man who beat Jimmy Bivins, Clarence Henry, and Nino Valdez? Who owned a victory over Archie Moore and fought him close three other times? Though not a huge hitter, Johnson was a superb boxer-puncher with a masterful left jab and unparalleled command of the ring.

There was nothing Johnson couldn't do, and he'd meet Jones head-on and try to engage him on the inside, where his size and strength would give him an edge. Jones is faster, but Johnson's defense was superb. He'd block or slip the majority of Jones' bombs from the outside and cut off the ring. And when he could, he'd time Jones' assaults and counter to the body. The longer the fight went, the worse it would get for Jones, and late in the match he'd wilt from the body attack. Johnson by late kayo. ■

Vernon Forrest

(Continued from page 31)

understand where he is coming from."

Duva, of course, wasn't afraid to question De La Hoya's choice. He said it's clear De La Hoya knew he would have had a tough fight against Forrest, and wanted no part of it. "Vernon is a very adaptable guy," Duva said. "He'd box rings around De La Hoya, but he's not a runner. What De La Hoya did against Trinidad was running. Vernon doesn't do that. He moves, because that's one of his skills, good lateral movement, but he does it to control the fight and set up his shots. If he got De La Hoya in the ring, he would take him apart. And don't think that Oscar doesn't know that."

Whether he does or doesn't is debatable. The point is, however, that De La Hoya has become enough of an attraction that he calls the shots, and Forrest is not on his dance card. And to get the accolades he believes are due him and that Duva said he deserves, Forrest is going to have to do better than beat an over-the-hill 140-pounder. Phillips gave Forrest enough trouble, especially with right hands, that it raised new questions about Forrest.

The only way he can answer them is to get back into the ring with one of those the public considers a star—and beat him. But for the time being, it doesn't appear Forrest will even have the opportunity. He will be left to wander the welterweight wasteland, picking up checks and beating men far inferior to himself. It is not what one would expect from a 31-0 ex-Olympian, but Forrest is kind of like a minor league home run champion sitting behind Mark McGwire. He may get a chance of his own someday, but it won't be while McGwire is on the same team.

Ken Adams, who trained Phillips for the bout with Forrest, said he can sympathize. One of Adams' fighters, WBA featherweight champion Freddie Norwood, has done nothing but win, but has had trouble garnering big-time attention. Norwood has been unable to even get representatives of Prince Naseem Hamed to the bargaining table. Adams, therefore, can understand what is going on in the minds of Forrest and his people. And he said there is only one solution: patience.

"The kid is good and the kid can definitely fight," Adams said. "Vince gave me everything he had, but the kid had youth and speed on his side. He won't be an easy guy for any of them top guys to fight. He's not the big puncher some people would make you think, but he can box and he'll hurt you if you give him a chance.

"But Vernon can't try to play manager or matchmaker or that type of thing. He needs to fight the best guys out there. If number one won't fight him, go after number two. And if number two says no, go after number three. If he gets wins over those guys, sooner or later the big ones will come, and then it would be up to him to take advantage of the chance."

Forrest laughed when he heard this assessment, but he said Adams is right.

"You can only fight the guy who is in

(Continued on page 61)

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Vernon Forrest

(Continued from page 59)

the ring with you, and that guy, whoever he might be, is the most dangerous opponent any fighter has in his career," Forrest said. "I have to be prepared for each and every fight. I don't want to give anyone any excuses not to give me a chance.

"If I lose, I would probably hear, 'Well, Vernon, if you had won that bout, you would have gotten your shot.' I don't need to hear that. And the way I can prevent hearing it is to win. And that's what I'm going to do. I'll just keep winning." ■

Kevin Iole covers boxing for the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

Teddy Atlas

(Continued from page 34)

So it was really perfect timing when the ESPN2 job came along in the fall of 1998, presenting Atlas with an opportunity to earn a steady paycheck in the business he's worked in all his life, while still leaving him enough time to do some training on the side when the situation appeals to him. He no longer has to leave his wife, Elaine, and his two children, 16-year-old Nicole and 14-year-old Teddy III, for months at a time to go away to training camp. And as it turned out, Atlas went from being considered merely among the best in his field to gaining appreciable recognition as the very best at what he now does. Not that he's particularly comfortable being told that.

"I appreciate people saying that, but really, I'm just doing my job, making the observations a color guy should make," Atlas said. "I was confident from the start that I could do this because this is the only business I've ever been in. I don't know if it's good or bad, but I never worked another job when I was a kid; all I did was boxing. I remember one time up in Catskill I painted a house, but that was about it. So I figure if I didn't know something by now about what I could tell people was going on when they were watching a prize fight, then I should have been doing something else all along."

Thankfully, boxing is exactly what Atlas has been doing all along, and *Friday Night Fights* viewers are reaping the benefits. He may not be able to philosophize as eloquently as Larry Merchant and he may not have the in-ring, big-fight experience to explain exactly what a fighter is going through like Bobby Czyz or Roy Jones can, but all in all, no color analyst sees more, reveals more, and helps the viewer understand more about what's going on inside the ropes than Atlas. His "Atlas' World" segments prior to the main event give the uneducated eye an idea of what to look for, and as more nuances arise after the bell rings, nobody is more likely to notice them and assess their potential impact on the result of the fight than Atlas.

Atlas is quick to point out that his ringside partner, Bob Papa, is the perfect set-up man for him, and that Papa has nurtured him along and helped him develop into a better broadcaster. Papa is just as quick to return the compliment.

"When you're talking about Teddy, you're not talking about glitz and TV packaging. You're talking about information and insight," Papa said. "As for the perfectly coifed talking head on TV, there's a zillion of those guys. But there's only one guy like Teddy Atlas that actually brings the goods.

"Guys like that, they appeal to all sports fans. Dick Vitale, when he came on, he broke every rule in the book. John Madden's an overweight, sweaty guy, but he's great at what he does. Billy Packer is not what you would call a glamour boy. When you're an analyst, you have be able to analyze and bring it in an entertaining way, and I think Teddy's no different than any of those guys I just mentioned."

Max Kellerman, the *FNF* in-studio analyst (and the frequent recipient of Atlas' playful on-air barbs), is as big an Atlas fan as anyone.

"I think he's by far the best color guy in boxing," Kellerman said. "I don't think it's close. Teddy combines technical expertise with an ability to communicate it. He's able to find things in horrible fights, boring fights, that make it interesting to watch. He also doesn't pretend that if a guy did what he was saying, that would make the difference. Sometimes a guy's just more talented than another guy. With Teddy, you never get a sense that he doesn't see the big picture.

"I couldn't do the kind of job he does; I don't have his technical expertise. It's the difference between someone who's playing rotisserie baseball and Billy Martin."

As Kellerman pointed out, Atlas' most impressive attribute is being able to take a dreadful fight and, if not making it downright fascinating, at least making it watchable. Though he sometimes wishes every ESPN2 fight could be a Mickey Ward-Reggie Green or Thomas Tate-Merqui Sosa, Atlas also thrives on and welcomes the challenge of a fight that forces him to talk over a chorus of boos. He doesn't allow himself to just criticize the efforts of the fighters and tell the audience that what they're watching is crap; he focuses on finding a way to make it as entertaining as possible.

But Atlas' on-air expertise is not due exclusively to the years spent in the gym developing the ability to break down subtleties and strategies. It's also the result of constant preparation, beginning the moment he gets home on Saturday from the previous night's show. Atlas usually spends about four hours on Saturday watching tapes of the fighters in the next week's main event, taking notes on what segments might work for "Atlas' World." On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evening, several more hours are spent studying and taking notes on the bios and fight-by-fight records of all the boxers, and he doesn't stop until he's comfortable that he knows everything he can possibly know about what he should be looking for once the bell rings.

"He's the hardest working guy you'll find," Peltz said. "One time, on a Wednesday night, he was up working until about three in the morning, leaving messages on my office machine in the middle of the night as different questions came up. I came in the next morning, and there were about six or seven messages from Teddy waiting for me."

Once all the homework has been done, Atlas departs on Thursday for the fight location, where the cycle wraps up the following night—only to begin again the next morning.

"One time when we were in the airport on Saturday morning," Atlas recalled, "Bob Papa just looked at me and said, 'Oh, Groundhog Day again.' And he was right. It starts to mesh in and there's no separation. But there's nobody complaining, because I'm grateful for what I'm doing."

Despite the fact that he's still facing a mortgage on his house that would have been completely paid off if he'd stuck around for one more Michael Moorer paycheck, Atlas does seem happy with the balance he's found between his ESPN work and his ever-diminishing training duties (though his schedule is

(Continued on page 63)

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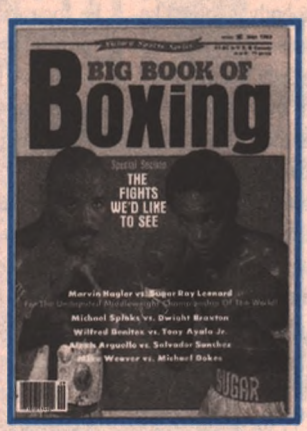

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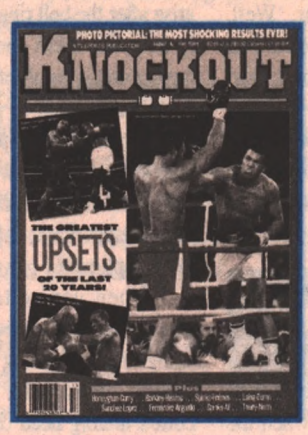

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Teddy Atlas

(Continued from page 61)

going to get even more hectic this summer when he works the Olympic broadcast alongside Marv Albert). He's still in the gym a few days a week, working with undefeated light heavyweight prospect Elvir Muriqi, as well as the occasional name fighters. He trained Junior Jones for several weeks—until the Hamed fight fell apart—because the challenge of facing such odds against a flawed superstar such as "The Prince" appealed to him. He was recently approached about training Andrew Golota, although the discussions never became serious. Considering the trouble Atlas has had in the past with fighters who weren't exactly renowned for being mentally strong, that kind of job would have all the makings of another massive headache.

"Teddy does these gun-for-hire things occasionally when it's worthwhile, then he gets caught up in the politics and it makes him sick again," Kellerman said. "The impression I get is that he's happy to be talking about it, and not directly involved in it."

And *Friday Night Fights* viewers are happy he's talking about it, too. For fight fans, Friday can never come early enough. ■

Don Fullmer

(Continued from page 47)

he said. "Maybe I just wasn't a crowd-pleaser. I felt they sidestepped me several times. I should've postponed it or something, but then Benvenuti probably would have fought Denny Moyer and sidestepped me again."

Fullmer made it into the ring in San Remo, but his illness "just took the sap out of me," he said. "After the first round, it felt like I'd gone 15. Otherwise, there's just no doubt in my mind I could've knocked that guy out."

When he did tag Benvenuti in the seventh round with a right-left combination to the head that sent the champion down, Fullmer was so tired that he didn't even realize what he'd done, and couldn't take advantage of the situation. As frustrating as it was for Don, it was almost worse for Gene, back home in West Jordan.

"I was watching in my basement with Don's wife and kids," he recalled, "and when he scored that knockdown, I guess I got a little excited." When Don didn't finish Benvenuti off, Gene's excitement turned to agitation. After the fight was over and they were heading upstairs, Gene heard one of Don's sons say to his mother, "How come Uncle Gene don't like Daddy? Did you hear what he called him?"

"I still don't know to this day what I called him," said Gene, "and I probably don't want to know."

Benvenuti got the unanimous decision (the Associated Press had it close, 72-70), and that was Fullmer's only chance at a world title. He remained a contender as both a middleweight and light heavyweight for the next four years, but retired on account of persistent injuries in 1973, with a career record of 53-20-5 (13).

A full-time bricklayer the whole time he was boxing, Fullmer laid the foundation for a more secure future after hanging up the gloves by joining the Salt Lake County Fire Department, from which he planned to retire in March.

Fullmer has been married for 44 years to wife Nedra, who holds claim to the most vicious knockout her husband ever suffered. "I'm kinda a huggy-muggy guy," he said. "I got to have lots of hugs and kisses. It was years ago and I was hugging her, and she told me to stop, and I wouldn't. Unbeknownst to me, she had a cast-iron frying pan in her hand, and the next thing I knew I was crawling on the ground looking for nickels." Don and Nedra have raised five sons and live close to Gene and Jay, near the house in which the brothers grew up in West Jordan.

"We've always been a close family," said Don. "We do a lot of things together." One of them is operating Fullmers' Gym, where area kids can come and work out and learn to box at no cost.

It's a good life, says Don, except for intermittent pangs about what might have been had that flu stayed in Hong Kong.

"I really had a great career as far as I'm concerned," he said. "The only thing I'd do different is beat the hell out of Benvenuti." Not long ago, he got his first look at a tape of his title fight when a fellow firefighter obtained a rare copy and put it in a VCR at the station.

"Go get the hankies," Fullmer told him beforehand, "so I can wipe the tears." ■

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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Oct. 1990: Send In The Clown: Is Jorge Paez A Phenom Or A Fraud? Color Pinup: Paul Banke. Interview: Tony Lopez. Also: Chavez-Taylor II, Jesse Benavides.

Nov. 1990: The Comeback Of Mike Tyson: A Crooked Course Straight To The Top. Color Pinup: Tony Lopez. Interview: Don Dunphy. Also: Davis-Breland, Riddick Bowe, federal commission.

Dec. 1990: The Heart Of The Matter: Who Will Survive The Holyfield-Douglas War? Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Michael Carbajal, Ruelas Brothers, Best Fighter Poll.

Jan. 1991: Macho Ado About Nothing? Why Hector Camacho Wants To Be Believed. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Irving Rudd. Also: Sugar Ray Leonard, Orlando Canizales, Vinny Pazienza.

Feb. 1991: 10 Fighters To Fear: Boxing's Most Destructive Hitters. Color Pinup: Razor Ruddock. Interview: Ray Mercer. Also: Roberto Duran, Saoul Mamby, Mills Lane, Sugar Ray Robinson.

May 1991: Ruddock Eyes The Big Upset Of Tyson. Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Jeff Fenech. Also: Virgil Hill, Pernell Whitaker, Alex Ramos, Simon Brown, Buddy McGirt.

June 1991: Exclusive KO Interview: Evander Holyfield. Color Pinup: Raul Perez. Also: Norris-Leonard, Charles Williams, champs of 1971 vs. 1991, Chavez.

July 1991: Riddick Bowe: Is He Destined To Be Heavyweight Champ? Color Pinup: Michael Carbajal. Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Bobby Czyz, Buster Douglas, Mark Breland.

Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different? Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

Sept. 1991: Remember Me? I Won The Fight! What "The Real Deal" Still Has To Deal With. Color Pinup: Ray Mercer. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Larry Holmes, southpaw heavyweights, Toney-Nunn, Brown-Taylor.

Oct. 1991: Thomas Hearns Works Another Miracle! Now There Are More Hills Left To Climb. Color Pinup: Humberto Gonzalez. Interview: Mike McCallum. Also: Norris-Curry, Richard Steele, Troy Dorsey.

Nov. 1991: Mike Tyson-The Only Heavyweight That Matters. Color Pinup: Thomas Hearns. Interview: Troy Dorsey. Also: Fenech-Nelson, James Toney, lost art of bodypunching.

Dec. 1991: Tyson vs. Holyfield-The Experts Analyze The Elements That Will Decide The Fight. Color Pinup: Joey Gamache. Also: Michael Moorer, Pernell Whitaker, Greg Richardson, Robert Quiroga.

Jan. 1992: The Tyson-Holyfield Showdown: An Exclusive Forecast By George Foreman. Color Pinup: Myung Woo Yuh. Also: Fenech-Nelson, TV announcers, boxing's toughest men, Toney-McCallum.

March 1992: KO Interview Mike Tyson: An In-Depth, Toe-To-Toe Talk With Boxing's Biggest Star. Color Pinup: Michael Moorer. Also: Thomas Hearns, Tracy Patterson, Larry Holmes, best fighter poll.

May 1992: Division-By-Division Faceoffs: The Best Of '92 vs. The Best Of '67. Color Pinup: James Warring. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Tommy Morrison, Bert Cooper, Gianfranco Rosi.

June 1992: If Not Tyson Or Holyfield, Then Who? Bowe? Moorer? Ruddock? Lewis? Mercer? Color Pinup: James Toney. Interview: Shelly Finkel. Also: Scotty Olson, overrated and underrated fighters, Orlin Norris, Whitaker-Pineda.

July 1992: The Title Reign of Evander Holyfield: A Reason To Hide ... Or A Reason For Pride? Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Julian Jackson. Also: Kelley-Dorsey, Nelson-Fenech, Kennedy McKinney.

Aug. 1992: Bowe Knows The Big Fight: The Top Contender Analyzes Holmes-Holyfield. Color Pinup: Julian Jackson. Interview: Michael Spinks. Also: Thomas Hearns, Blue Horizon, fighting fear, Toney-Barkley, Greg Haugen.

Sept. 1992: Can Tommy Morrison Punch Out The Theory ... White Men Can't Fight. Color Pinup: Welcome Ncita. Interview: Ken Norton. Also: Reggie Johnson, Jimmy Paul, McGirt-Blocker, Ali-Shavers.

Oct. 1992: The Olympics: Golden Memories ... And Golden Futures? Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Genaro Hernandez, Terry Norris.

Nov. 1992: Foreman vs. Holmes: The Fight Evander Holyfield Should Have Prevented. Color Pinup: Iran Barkley. Interview: Joey Gamache. Also: Hector Camacho, Tracy Patterson, Rudy Zavala.

Dec. 1992: The Final Four: Ruddock vs. Lewis, Holyfield vs. Bowe. Color Pinup: Genaro Hernandez. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: Whitaker-Pineda, Bowe-Coetzer, Alex Stewart, Gamache-Lopez.

Jan. 1993: Holyfield vs. Bowe: Who Will Win and Why. Color Pinup: Al Cole. Interview: Vinny Pazienza. Also: James Toney, Terrence Alli, Maurice Blocker.

March 1993: Not Just Another English Muffin: Lennox Lewis Powers His Way Toward The Title. Color Pinup: Leeonzer Barber. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Reggie Johnson, Lopez-Gamache, USA Network.

May 1993: Recapping The Future: Julio

Cesar Chavez' Road To 100-0. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Junior Jones. Also: Buddy McGirt, Riddick Bowe, Raul Marquez.

Dec. 1993: The KO Feud Rages On: "I Will Torture You!" Says Riddick Bowe To Lennox Lewis. Color Pinup: Kennedy McKinney. Also: Mississippi boxing, George Foreman, Yori Boy Campas , Carbajal-Kim, Morrison-Moorer.

Jan. 1994: Outrage At The Alamodome: "Sweet Pea" Shafted! Color Pinup: Orlando Canizales. Interview: Kennedy McKinney. Also: James Toney, book of lists, M.A. Barrera.

July 1994: The Upset Epidemic! Carbajal's Conqueror: Chiquita Gonzalez. Color Pinup: Junior Jones. Interview: Rafael Ruelas. Also: Jake Rodriguez, Czyz-Hearns preview, Randall-Chavez II preview.

June 1995: The Tug-Of-War Over Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Wilfredo Vasquez. Interview: Oliver McCall. Plus: Alejandro Gonzalez, Alexis Arguello, Kostya Tszyu.

March 1996: Whether He Fights Or Not ... Tyson Is Hot! Hot!! Hot!!! Color Pinup: Marco Antonio Barrera. Interview: Jose Sulaiman. Plus: Reggie Tuur, heavyweight prospects, champion's edge.

June 1996: Destined For The Hall Of Fame: Who's In, Who's Out. Color Pinup: Wayne McCullough. Interview: Cedric Kushner. Plus: Danny Romero, Mark Breland, Dynamite Dozen—the next 12.

July 1996: Awesome Again! Tyson Destroys Bruno. Color Pinup: Tyson-Bruno. Interview: Christy Martin. Plus: Chavez-De La Hoya preview, Derrick Gainer, '96 Hall of Fame inductees.

Sept. 1996: Tyson vs. Seldon. Don't Bet On This Fight Until You've Read This Story! Color Pinup: Arturo Gatti. Interview: Butterbean. Plus: Dana Rosenblatt, '92 Olympians, McGuigan-Pedroza.

Nov. 1996 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Bob Arum. Plus: Roy Jones, Roberto Duran, Joe Cortez.

Dec. 1996: Andrew Golota—Taking The Low Road to Stardom. Color Pinup: Mark Johnson. Interview: Rock Newman. Plus: De La Hoya-Gonzalez, Chuck Bodak, bizarre endings, Chavez-Rosario.

Winter 1996: This Is War! Holyfield-Tyson Will Be Explosive ... And Short. Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Plus: Riddick Bowe, David Reid, Holyfield-Qawi.

Jan. 1997 (Special 88-Page Edition): Bowe-Golota II: Hatred And Vengeance ... It's A Beautiful Thing! Color Pinup: Johnny Tapia. Interview: Lou Duva. Plus: Mouse Strauss, heavyweight rematches, Azumah Nelson.

Feb. 1997: KO's 1997 Wish List. Color Pinup: Ike Quartey. Interview: Naseem Hamed. Plus: David Tua, Felix Trinidad, Adolpho Washington, Bobby Czyz.

March 1997: Holyfield's Trainer Tells All! An Inside Look At The Upset Of The Year. Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Plus: George Foreman, Lupe Pintor, boxing bill, Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Aug. 1997: Oscar Reaches ... But Can't Grasp The Stars. Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Plus: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

Sept. 1997: A Legitimate Grudge Match! Why Romero-Tapia Could Be The Fight Of The Year. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: David Tua. Plus: Ike Quartey, George Foreman, top promoters.

Nov. 1997: Filling In The Missing Pieces: What "The Bite" Means To Boxing. Color Pinup: Christy Martin. Interview: Jim Lampley. Plus: Vince Phillips, British prospects, Iran Barkley.

Dec. 1997: Johnny Tapia Outshines Danny Romero: The Defining Moment In A "Crazy" Life." Color Pinup: Genaro Hernandez. Interview: Frans Botha. Plus: Lewis-Akiwande, Don King, Charles Brewer.

Holiday 1997 (Special 88-Page Edition): Holyfield-Moorer II: Can Evander Avenge His Ugliest Defeat? Color Pinup: Vince Phillips. Interview: Mills Lane. Plus: Roy Jones, Baby Jake Matlala, Boxing 2000.

Jan. 1998: De La Hoya Humbles The Macho Man: "Oscar's The Best I've Ever Fought." Color Pinup: William Guthrie. Interview: Mark Johnson. Plus: Johnny Tapia, Pinklon Thomas, defense.

Feb. 1998: Is Lennox Lewis The World's Best Heavyweight? Color Pinup: Charles Brewer. Interview: Marc Ratner. Plus: Otis Grant, Arturo Gatti.

March 1998: Evander Holyfield: For The Real Deal, Lewis Is No Big Deal. Color Pinup: Lou Del Valle. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Plus: David Izon, Meldrick Taylor, rapid weight loss.

May 1998: Living Up To The Hype: Sometimes They Do ... Sometimes They Don't. Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Best Of ... (Part III). Plus: Naseem Hamed, Marty Denkin, women's boxing.

June 1998: Lewis vs. Holyfield: Why The Fight Of The Year Isn't Going To Happen. Color Pinup: Evander Holyfield. Interview: Eddie Futch. Plus: Hector Lizarraga, pain, Head-To-Head review.

Aug. 1998: Lewis Bombs Out Briggs: Would The WBC Champ Do This To Holyfield? Color Pinup: Keith Mullings. Interview: Shane Mosley. Plus: Pernell Whitaker, Marco Antonio Barrera, Roberto Garcia.

Sept. 1998: Can Mike Tyson Make A Successful Comeback? Sugar Ray Leonard Has The Answer. Color Pinup: Michael Grant. Interview: Brad Jacobs. Plus: Naseem Hamed, Wayne McCullough, Kirk Johnson.

Oct. 1998: The Ultimate Fantasy Card. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: Roy Jones. Plus: Brendan Ingle, NYPD boxing, prospect blueprint.

Nov. 1998 The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Tim Austin. Plus: Cesar Bazan, Spencer Oliver, Bobby Czyz.

Dec. 1998: Winning Fights Is Easier Than Winning Fans: Why Can't We Appreciate Roy Jones? Color Pinup: Tim Austin. Interview: Michael Grant. Plus: Christy Martin, Ali Reform Act, one-hit wonders.

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Nov. 1999: De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: "It's Gonna Come Down To Who The Hell Wants It Most!" Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Arturo Gatti. Plus: Roy Jones, Sugar Shane Mosley, Vassily Jirov.

Dec. 1999: David Reid & Fernando Vargas: Olympic Teammates On A Collision Course! Color Pinup: Zab Judah. Interview: Ike Ibeabuchi. Plus: Vitaly Klitschko, Antonio Tarver, Mike Tyson.

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Jan. 2000: Fool's Gold? Trinidad May Have Tarnished Oscar's Image Forever! Color Pinup: Paulie Ayala. Interview: Tony Ayala Jr. Plus: David Reid, Johnny Nelson.

Feb. 2000: Breakout 2000: Who's Going To Lead The Way In Y2K? Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bob Arum. Plus: Shane Mosley, Wise-Chavez, Iran Barkley.

March 2000: Mike Tyson: "I'm Tired Of This Crap!" So Are We, Mike! Color Pinup: Vernon Forrest. Interview: James Page. Plus: Erik Morales & Naseem Hamed, Diego Corrales, women's boxing.

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WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were compiled as of November 1999, the WBC as of January 2000, and the IBF as of January 2000.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Lennox Lewis (GB)	C	C	C
John Ruiz (USA)	1	3	4
Michael Grant (USA)	2	6	2
Evander Holyfield (USA)	3	2	3
Wladimir Klitchko (UKR)	4	5	12
David Tua (NZ)	5	7	1
Larry Donald (USA)	6	9	5
Henry Akinwande (GB)	7	1	6
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	8	–	–
Andrew Golota (POL)	9	–	–
Shannon Briggs (USA)	10	–	–
Oleg Maskaev (UKR)	13	4	10
Derrick Jefferson (USA)	27	8	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	10	8
Chris Byrd (USA)	18	–	7
Danell Nicholson (USA)	–	–	9

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	C	–	–
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	–	C	–
Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)	–	–	C
James Toney (USA)	1	–	7
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	2	–	–
Alex Gonzalez (PR)	3	7	–
Torsten May (GER)	4	9	3
Joe Siluvangi (FRA)	5	–	–
Virgil Hill (USA)	6	2	6
Dale Brown (CAN)	7	11	9
Imamu Mayfield (USA)	8	5	8
Lou Del Valle (USA)	9	–	–
Louis Azille (DR)	10	–	–
Saul Montana (MEX)	–	1	1
Valery Vikhor (LAT)	–	3	–
Alexander Gurov (UKR)	–	4	–
Akim Tafer (FRA)	–	6	–
Andre Purlette (GUY)	–	8	5
Arthur Williams (USA)	17	10	4
Alex Gonzales (USA)	–	–	2
Carl Thompson (GB)	15	–	10

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	C	C	C
Michael Nunn (USA)	1	9	–
Clinton Woods (GB)	2	12	10
Eric Harding (USA)	3	6	2
Reggie Johnson (USA)	4	–	6
Yawe Davis (ITA)	5	–	–
Antonio Tarver (USA)	6	–	1
David Telesco (USA)	7	2	3
Greg Wright (USA)	8	–	–
Thomas Ulrich (GER)	9	–	–
Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)	10	7	4
Richard Hall (USA)	–	1	–
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	3	7
Frank Liles (USA)	–	4	–
Derrick Harmon (USA)	11	5	8
Timo Masua (NZ)	–	8	–
Jorge Castro (ARG)	13	10	–
Muhammad Siluvangi (ZAI)	–	–	5
Jimmy Crawford (USA)	–	–	9

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Markus Beyer (GER)	C	–	–
Byron Mitchell (USA)	–	C	–
Sven Ottke (GER)	–	–	C
Glenn Catley (GB)	1	–	–
David Starie (GB)	2	6	5
Eric Lucas (CAN)	3	4	–
Richie Woodhall (GB)	4	–	–
Mario Velt (GER)	5	3	11
Omar Sheika (USA)	6	–	7
Dana Rosenblatt (USA)	7	–	–
Charles Brewer (USA)	8	10	1
Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)	9	2	–
Frank Liles (USA)	10	–	–
Bruno Girard (FRA)	–	1	6
Manuel Siacca (PR)	–	5	–
Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)	12	7	–
Mike Makata (NZ)	–	8	–
Fredric Alvarez (SWE)	22	9	–
Thomas Tate (USA)	–	11	2
James Butler (USA)	26	–	3
Guillermo Jones (PAN)	–	–	4
Tocker Pudwill (USA)	–	–	8
Lloyd Bryant (USA)	–	–	9
Syd Vanderpool (CAN)	–	–	10

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Holmes (USA)	C	–	–
William Joppy (USA)	–	C	–
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	–	–	C
Robert McCracken (GB)	1	8	3
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	2	–	9
Kevin Palmer (USA)	3	–	–
Erland Betare (FRA)	4	–	–
Davide Ciarlante (ITA)	5	–	11
Howard Eastman (GB)	6	2	10
Lonnie Bradley (USA)	7	–	–
Johnson Tshuma (ZIM)	8	12	12
Ali Ennebati (FRA)	9	–	8
Davey Hilton (CAN)	10	10	4
Rito Ruvalcaba (MEX)	19	1	7
Winky Wright (USA)	–	3	–
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	4	–
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	5	–
Julio Cesar Green (DR)	–	6	–
Ramon Moyano (ARG)	18	7	–
Dana Rosenblatt (USA)	–	9	6
Vacant	–	–	1
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	–	2
Brian Barbosa (USA)	15	–	5

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Francisco Castillejo (SPA)	C	–	–
David Reid (USA)	–	C	–
Fernando Vargas (USA)	–	–	C
Tony Marshall (USA)	1	–	–
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	2	1	–
Roman Karmazin (RUS)	3	8	–
Anthony Jones (USA)	4	10	–
Laurent Boudouani (FRA)	5	2	10
Tony Badea (ROM)	6	–	–
Alfred Ankamah (GHA)	7	–	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	8	3	–
Akira Ohigashi (JAP)	9	–	–
Carl Daniels (USA)	10	12	6
Jose Luis Lopez (MEX)	–	4	–
Jose Flores (MEX)	–	5	–
Rodney Jones (USA)	–	6	11
Raul Frank (GUY)	–	7	–
Marcos Avendano (VEN)	–	9	–
Ross Thompson (USA)	26	–	1
Paul Vaden (USA)	11	–	2
Bronco McKart (USA)	16	–	3
Emmett Linton (USA)	–	11	4
Winky Wright (USA)	–	–	5
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	–	7
Pat Coleman (USA)	–	–	8
Marshall Simpson (GUY)	–	–	9

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Felix Trinidad (PR)	C	–	C
James Page (USA)	–	C	–
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	1	1	–
Derrell Coley (USA)	2	–	–
Shane Mosley (USA)	3	–	2
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	4	5	5
Vernon Forrest (USA)	5	6	3
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	6	11	–
Hector Camacho Jr (USA)	7	–	–
Kofi Jantuah (GHA)	8	–	–
Carlos Baldomir (ARG)	9	10	–
Andrei Pestraiev (RUS)	10	3	–
Andrew Lewis (GUY)	24	2	10
Michael Trabant (GERE)	25	4	–
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	7	–
Oba Carr (USA)	14	8	4
Jeff Malcolm (AUS)	–	9	–
Raul Frank (USA)	–	–	1
Andrew Murray (USA)	–	–	6
Sean Sullivan (AUSTRL)	–	–	7
Vince Phillips (USA)	–	–	8
Sam Garr (USA)	17	–	9

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	C	–	–
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	–	C	–
Vacant	–	–	C
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	1	–	–
Oktay Urkal (TUR)	2	–	6
Diobelis Hurtado (CUB)	3	7	–
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	4	2	–
Ahmed Santos (USA)	5	–	–
Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)	6	–	–

Vince Phillips (USA)	7	–	–
Mickey Ward (USA)	8	11	9
Arturo Gatti (CAN)	9	–	–
Gianluca Branco (ITA)	10	–	–
Hector Camacho Jr (PR)	–	1	5
Thomas Damgaard (DEN)	–	3	7
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	–	4	–
Fred Pendleton (USA)	–	5	–
Gabriel Mapuoka (FRA)	19	6	10
Junichi Ono (JAP)	–	8	–
Elio Ortiz (VEN)	–	9	–
Demetrio Ceballos (PAN)	–	10	–
Zab Judah (USA)	–	–	1
Jan Bergman (SA)	–	–	2
Allan Vester (DEN)	22	–	3
Cesar Leiva (ARG)	–	–	4
Joey Gamache (USA)	–	–	8

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Steve Johnston (USA)	C	–	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	C	–
Paul Spadafora (USA)	–	–	C
Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)	1	–	–
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	2	–	–
Lovemore Ndou (SA)	3	–	6
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	4	–	–
Billy Schwer (GB)	5	–	–
Rick Yoshimura (JAP)	6	5	–
Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)	7	–	12
Daomai Sithkodam (THAI)	8	–	–
Oscar Garcia Cano (SPA)	9	3	–
Ivan Robinson (USA)	10	–	5
Vacant	–	1	–
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	12	2	–
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	–	4	–
Stefano Zoff (ITA)	–	6	–
Jean-Baptiste Mendy (FRA)	13	7	–
Golden Johnson (USA)	–	8	–
Miguel Calist (PAN)	–	9	–
Raul Balbi (ARG)	–	10	–
Billy Irwin (CAN)	22	–	1
Joel Perez (USA)	–	–	2
Israel Cardona (USA)	–	–	3
Dennis Holbaek (DEN)	–	–	4
George Scott (SWE)	–	–	7
Stephane Smith (GB)	–	–	8
James Leija (USA)	11	–	9
Wilfrido Ruiz (USA)	–	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Floyd Mayweather (USA)	C	–	–
Jongkwon Baek (KOR)	–	C	–
Diego Corrales (USA)	–	–	C
Goyo Vargas (MEX)	1	–	–
Jesus Chavez (USA)	2	–	9
Derrick Gainer (USA)	3	5	1
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	4	–	–
Kengo Nagashima (JAP)	5	–	–
Boris Sinitsin (RUS)	6	–	–
Tiger Ari (PHIL)	7	–	–
Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)	8	–	–
Robert Garcia (USA)	9	12	5
Lakva Sim (MON)	10	2	–
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	–	1	–
Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)	–	3	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	–	4	–
Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)	22	6	–
Dennis Holbaek (DEN)	17	7	–
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	–	8	–
Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)	28	9	–
Kyuchul Choi (KOR)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)	25	–	3
Harold Warren (USA)	–	–	4
Carlos Hernandez (USA)	–	–	6
Santos Rebolledo (VEN)	–	–	7
Luis Navarro (USA)	–	11	8
John Brown (USA)	–	–	10

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Vacant	C	–	–
Fred Norwood (USA)	–	C	–
Paul Ingle (GB)	–	–	C
Luisito Espinosa (PHIL)	1	8	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	2	–	–
Injin Chi (KOR)	3	–	–
Cesar Soto (MEX)	4	–	–
Tony Wehbee (AUS)	5	–	7
Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)	6	–	–
Edgar Barcenas (MEX)	7	–	–
Istvan Kovacs (HUN)	8	6	–
Takeo Imaoka (JAP)	9	–	–
Augie Sanchez (USA)	10	–	9
Pablo Chacon (ARG)	–	1	3
Nana Konadu (GHA)	–	2	–
Victor Polo (COL)	–	3	10
Angel Vasquez (PR)	–	4	8
Philip Ndou (SA)	–	5	–
Frederic Perez (FRA)	20	7	–
Richard Carrillo (VEN)	–	9	–
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	14	10	–
Vuyani Bungu (SA)	–	–	1
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	–	2
Frankie Toledo (USA)	–	–	4
Oscar Larios (MEX)	–	–	5
Manuel Medina (MEX)	17	–	6

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Erik Morales (MEX)	C	–	–
Nestor Garza (MEX)	–	C	–
Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)	–	–	C
Michael Brodie (GB)	1	7	3
Willie Jorrin (USA)	2	–	4
Sergei Devakov (UKR)	3	–	–
Oscar Larios (MEX)	4	–	–
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	5	–	–
Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)	6	–	–
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	7	–	8
Clarence Adams (USA)	8	–	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	9	5	–
Frank Archuleta (USA)	10	11	–
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	–	1	–
Vladislav Antonov (RUS)	22	2	6
Bugiarso (INDO)	–	3	–
Yobert Ortega (VEN)	–	4	–
Jose Luis Valbuena (VEN)	–	6	–
John Johnson (USA)	14	8	9
Guty Espadas (MEX)	–	9	11
Jose Rojas (VEN)	–	10	–
Ernesto Gray (COL)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Jesus Salud (USA)	–	–	5
Agapito Sanchez (DR)	21	–	7
Jason Pires (USA)	–	–	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	C	–	–
Paul Ayala (USA)	–	C	–
Tim Austin (USA)	–	–	C
Adan Vargas (MEX)	1	2	4
Hugo Dianzo (MEX)	2	10	–
Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX)	3	7	–
Jess Maca (PHIL)	4	11	–
Gerardo Martinez (MEX)	5	–	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	6	–	5
Ricardo Barajas (MEX)	7	–	–
Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)	8	–	–
Keiji Yamaguchi (JAP)	9	–	–
Francisco Mateos (MEX)	10	–	–
Vacant	–	1	–
Johnny Tapia (USA)	–	3	–
Sahoiu Sithchai Condo (THAI)	–	4	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	–	5	–
Danny Romero (USA)	–	6	–
Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)	–	8	–
Rafael Marquez (MEX)	13	9	12
Jesus Perez (COL)	20	–	1
Arthur Johnson (USA)	12	–	2
Jose Mendoza (COL)	–	–	3
Mauricio Pastrana (COL)	–	–	6
Noel Wilders (GB)	21	–	7
Pete Frissina (USA)	23	–	8
Mauricio Martinez (PAN)	–	–	9
Steve Dotse (GHA)	26	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
In Joo Cho (KOR)	C	–	–
Hideki Todaka (JAP)	–	C	–
Mark Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Eric Morel (USA)	1	–	–
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	2	11	–
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	3	9	10
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	4	3	5
Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)	5	–	6
Genaro Garcia (MEX)	6	–	–
Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)	7	–	–
Masanori Tokuyama (JAP)	8	–	–
Seungrok Choi (KOR)	9	–	–
Trinidad Mendoza (MEX)	10	–	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	–	1	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	2	4
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	20	4	–
Edison Torres (VEN)	–	5	–
Felix Machado (VEN)	–	6	2
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	–	7	–
Akihigo Nago (JAP)	–	8	–
Lester Fuentes (NIC)	21	10	–
Julio Gamboa (NIC)	–	–	1
Luis Bolanos (COL)	–	12	3
Raul Juarez (MEX)	–	–	7
Isidro Garcia (USA)	–	–	8
Francisco Tejedor (COL)	–	–	9

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Medgoen 3K Battery (THAI)	C	–	–
Sornpichai Kratchingdaeng (THAI)	–	C	–
Irene Pacheco (COL)	–	–	C
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	1	–	–
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	2	–	6
David Guerault (FRA)	3	5	1
Gabriel Mira (MEX)	4	–	–
Mike Trejo (USA)	5	12	4
Oscar Arciniega (MEX)	6	–	–
Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)	7	–	–
Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)	8	–	–
Raul Juarez (MEX)	9	–	–
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	10	11	3
Jose Bonilla (VEN)	–	1	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	2	10
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	3	–
Panieng Okuda (THAI)	–	4	–
Eric Morel (USA)	–	6	–
Hugo Soto (ARG)	–	7	11
Jose Lopez (VEN)	–	8	–
Gabriel Munoz (MEX)	–	9	–
Gilberto Keb Baas (MEX)	12	10	–
Pedro Pena (USA)	–	–	2
Zoltan Lunka (TUR)	21	–	5
Jose Landin (USA)	–	–	7
Angel Priolo (COL)	–	–	8
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	–	9

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Yosam Choi (KOR)	C	–	–
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	C	–
Will Grigsby (USA)	–	11	C
Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)	1	3	5
Jorge Arce (MEX)	2	9	10
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	3	–	–
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	4	2	–
Panieng Sasiprabha (THAI)	5	–	–
Bebis Mendoza (COL)	6	–	–
Sangik Yang (KOR)	7	–	–
Jose Luis Zepeda (MEX)	8	–	–
Eric Ortiz (MEX)	9	–	–
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)	10	–	–
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	–	1	–
Pongsaklek Nakornton (THAI)	–	4	–
Nelson Dieppa (DR)	11	5	–
Yura Dimas (MON)	–	6	–
Jose Sanjuanelo (COL)	–	7	–
Jake Matlala (SA)	–	8	7
Ratanapol Sor Vorapin (THAI)	–	10	4
Pedro Rodriguez (COL)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Will Grigsby (USA)	–	–	3
Pongsaklek Sithkanongsak (THAI)	–	–	6
Alex Sanchez (PR)	–	–	8
Domingo Guillen (DR)	–	–	9

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)	C	–	–
Noel Arumbulet (VEN)	–	C	–
Zolani Petelo (SA)	–	–	C
Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)	1	10	–
Daniel Reyes (COL)	2	6	6
Erdene Chuluun (MON)	3	–	–
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	4	–	11
Udomdet Porpaoin (THAI)	5	8	–
Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)	6	–	8
Fernando Luna (MEX)	7	–	–
Chartchai Nokornton-Parkview (THAI)	8	–	–
Makoto Suzuki (JAP)	9	–	–
Manny Melchor (PHIL)	10	–	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	1	–
Hurricane Chulun (IND)	–	2	–
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	–	3	–
Satoru Abe (JAP)	17	4	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	5	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	–	7	–
Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)	16	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Mickey Cantwell (GB)	–	–	3
Rocky Palma (JAP)	–	–	4
Faisol Akbar (INDO)	–	–	5
Alberto Rossel (PERU)	–	–	7
Rocky Lim (TWN)	–	–	9
Juan Herrera (COL)	–	–	10

CLASSIC

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ ... THE KID FROM CULIACAN

Mexico's Brightest Star Heads For Showdown With Ramirez

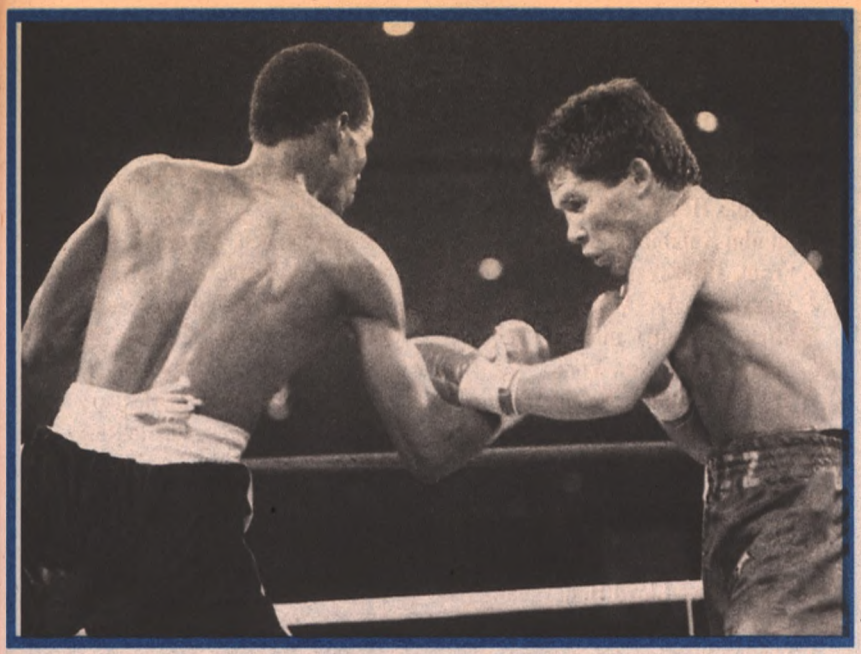
By Jack Welsh

Too bad Jose Luis Ramirez didn't have time for a breather in Las Vegas last spring. The Mexican-born WBC lightweight champion might have found a new twist on how not to motivate Julio Cesar Chavez, who is Ramirez' counterpart as the WBA's top man. Of course, the 29-year-old Ramirez has adopted France as his home base, and there isn't much in this world more intriguing than April in Paris, not even watching the charismatic Chavez enhance his position as one of boxing's premier celebrities.

Besides, Ramirez and Chavez were once stablemates south of the border. By now Jose Luis probably feels the book is full on his away-from-the-ring compadre, the Latin duo having sparred hundreds of rounds when tutor Ramon Felix was

Chavez was one of Mexico's brightest stars. The WBA lightweight king had his sights set on grabbing two-thirds of the 135-pound title. But first, Chavez had to get by rangy Rodolfo Aguilar.

From THE RING, August 1988



Aguilar was not intimidated by Chavez at the outset, and he hit the champion with a pair of right uppercuts midway through the first round. Aguilar also used combinations to keep the action near midring.

preparing them for other opponents. Ramirez also had to figure there was no rush to jet across the Atlantic after his controversial split decision over Pernell Whitaker in March. August wasn't that far away, and promoter Don King was practically drooling in tabbing the "dog's day" month as the time when two-thirds of the 135-pound crown would be unified with Chavez and Ramirez meeting outdoors at the Las Vegas Hilton hotel-casino. What Ramirez missed unfolded 72 hours before Chavez made the first defense of the WBA laurels he won last November with a spectacular stoppage of Edwin Rosario.

The 25-year-old from Culiacan, Mexico, and his entourage were returning to the scene of Chavez' greatest triumph to await the challenge of Panama's Rodolfo Aguilar, a fresh face who advanced to the WBC's top contendership without ever leaving the Caribbean.

Commitments elsewhere kept King out of town for the final media session with the principals in the Hilton's sprawling convention area. Dandy Don wasn't missed. Ego notwithstanding, the promoter would have agreed, considering the unrehearsed scenario.

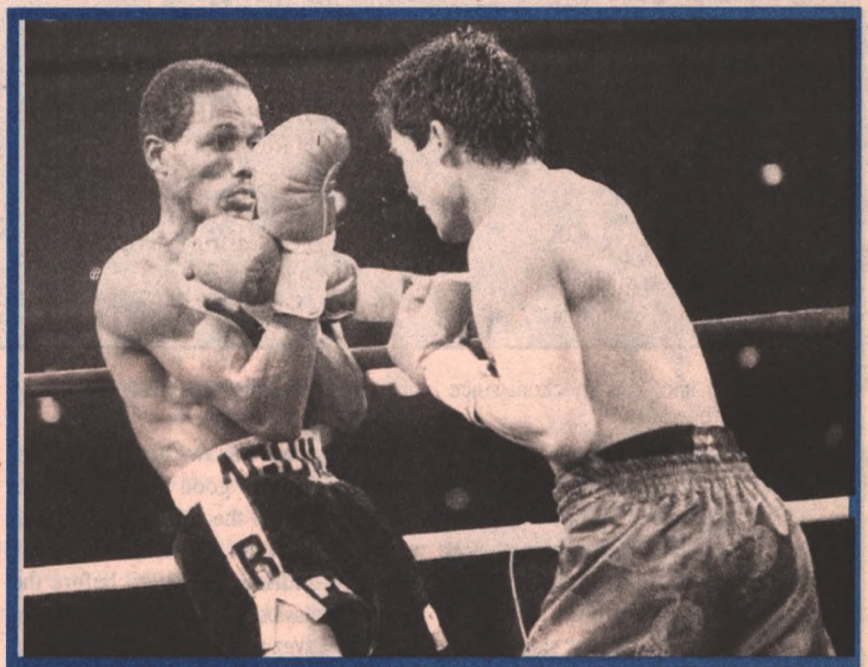
Aguilar, all six-feet of him, came to the dais with 20-1 (10) credentials and manager/trainer Luis Spada to translate. The lithe challenger also unrolled a multi-colored life-sized poster of Chavez, who, at 5'7", looked even smaller sitting down to Aguilar's left and looking up. Presenting the poster as a gift to the champion, Aguilar surprised the assembly, heavy with Mexican and Latin-American press, when he ripped it into small pieces and dropped it in front of Chavez.

The piece with Julio Cesar's choirboy face on it was undamaged. Chavez grabbed the pen, scribbling: "To Rodolfo, with my love," and handed it back to his antagonist. Chavez, with his dark eyes narrowing, told the laughing audience: "I think that Rodolfo Aguilar shouldn't have broken such a beautiful picture. He should have only said that he felt bad for me, not broken the picture. Now I know he doesn't have good feeling for me. Aguilar is going to pay for that."

Aguilar, who celebrated his 23rd birthday back in Panama City on May 8, had rolled into Las Vegas a week before the scheduled 12-round title bout with a reputation of being a pretty fair high school southpaw pitcher, good enough to force a decision whether it would be boxing or baseball. Rodolfo decided to throw punches rather than strikes. When he wasn't winning a few dollars on the Hilton's quarter slot machines, Aguilar stoically insisted to everyone in sight he was going to turn Chavez into a catcher.

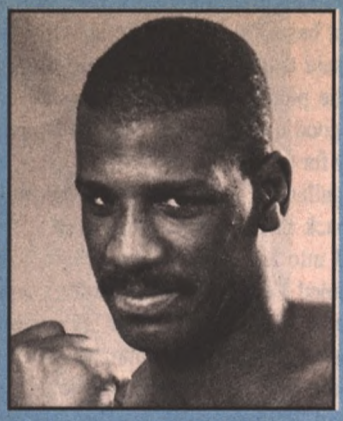
Aguilar may have compounded the friction in the countdown to the fight, calling Chavez "an ordinary fighter in beating Rosario. And no different than some of the others I've beaten. If he thinks he's the greatest, he'll have to beat me to prove it. No way Chavez can do that."

In all honesty, neither the shredded poster nor Aguilar's translated barbs were of serious consequence in triggering Chavez' dedication to move to his 58th



Five inches shorter and with a four-inch reach disadvantage, Chavez still managed to get inside on Aguilar. By the end of the first, the undefeated Chavez bloodied Aguilar's nose and sent him to the canvas for only the third time in his six-year career.

THE RING RATINGS, August 1988



Michael Spinks

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Michael Spinks, Missouri
1. Mike Tyson, New York
2. Evander Holyfield, Georgia
3. Tim Witherspoon, Pennsylvania
4. Tony Tucker, Michigan
5. Carl Williams, New York
6. Pinklon Thomas, Michigan
7. Adilson Rodrigues, Brazil
8. Trevor Berbick, Florida
9. Donovan Ruddock, Canada
10. Johnny Du Plooy, South Africa

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Charles Williams, Ohio
2. Virgil Hill, North Dakota
3. Bobby Czyz, New Jersey
4. Leslie Stewart, Trinidad
5. Dennis Andries, England
6. Tony Willis, Illinois
7. Don Lalonde, Canada
8. Chong Pal Park, Korea
9. Lindell Holmes, Michigan
10. Ramzi Hassan, California

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Thomas Hearns, Michigan
2. Sumbu Kalambay, Italy
3. Frank Tate, Texas
4. Marvin Hagler, Massachusetts
5. Michael Nunn, California
6. Iran Barkley, New York
7. Mike McCallum, Jamaica
8. Matthew Hilton, Canada
9. Herol Graham, England
10. Gianfranco Rosi, Italy

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Lloyd Honeyghan, England
1. Marlon Starling, Connecticut
2. Simon Brown, Washington, D.C.
3. Maurice Blocker, Washington, D.C.
4. Mark Breland, New York
5. Jorge Vaca, Mexico
6. Rollin Williams, Arizona
7. Juan Martin Coggi, Argentina
8. Roger Mayweather, Nevada
9. James McGirt, New York
10. Meldrick Taylor, Pennsylvania

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Julio Cesar Chavez, Puerto Rico
2. Greg Haugen, Washington
3. Pernell Whitaker, Virginia
4. Jose Luis Ramirez, Mexico
5. Edwin Rosario, Puerto Rico
6. Vinny Pazienza, Rhode Island
7. Rocky Lockridge, New York
8. Amancio Castro, Pennsylvania
9. Primo Ramos, Mexico
10. Lupe Suarez, Texas

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Antonio Esparragoza, Venezuela
1. Jeff Fenech, Australia
2. Calvin Grove, Pennsylvania
3. Bernardo Pinango, Venezuela
4. Jeff Franklin, Nevada
5. Hector Lopez, Mexico
6. Marcos Villasana, Mexico
7. Victor Callejas, Puerto Rico
8. Steve Cruz, Texas
9. Julio Gervacio, Puerto Rico
10. Louie Espinoza, Arizona

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Miguel Lora, Colombia
2. Khaosai Galaxy, Thailand
3. Kelvin Seabrooks, N. Carolina
4. Gilberto Roman, Mexico
5. Raul Perez, Mexico
6. Wilfredo Vasquez, Puerto Rico
7. Santos Laciar, Argentina
8. Sugar Baby Rojas, Colombia
9. Takuya Muguruma, Japan
10. Kenny Mitchell, Florida

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Sot Chitalada, Thailand
1. Jung-Koo Chang, Korea
2. Fidel Bassa, Colombia
3. Myung Woo Yuh, Korea
4. Hilario Zapata, Panama
5. Rolando Bohol, Philippines
6. Gabriel Bernal, Mexico
7. Dodie Penalosa, Philippines
8. Paul Gonzalez, California
9. Benedicto Murillo, Panama
10. Duke McKenzie, Colombia

straight victory and 49th knockout since turning pro in 1980.

A crowd of 6,248, creating a $986,850 gate in the Hilton Center, probably sensed the judges' official ballots would not be necessary well before Chavez' patience and punch methodically prepared Aguilar for a six-round ending on a technical knockout. Chavez, five inches shorter and minus four in reach at 66⅛", was fearless fighting out of a semi-crouch, dipping artfully with head and shoulder feints, while alternately punching effectively to the head and body.

Aguilar wasn't in awe of the champion, scoring with two good right uppercuts midway through the opening round and using combination counters to keep the action at midring. However, before the first intermission, the willing Panamanian learned Chavez was anything but ordinary. With seven seconds left in the first round, Chavez snapped off a right-left and threw another short right that dropped Aguilar flat on his back for only the third time in a six-year career. Rodolfo, with nose bloodied, fell near his own corner and scampered to his feet before referee Richard Steele could start a count at the bell.

Despite an instant two-point deficit, Aguilar didn't lose his poise while applying caution in what was clearly hostile surroundings. (Don't forget Panama's would-be dictator, General Noriega, was still making negative international headlines.) Early in the second round, Chavez, 135,

The next step for Chavez was a showdown with Mexican-born WBC champion Jose Luis Ramirez, who won a controversial split decision over Pernell Whitaker in March 1988.

drove Aguilar, 134½, across the ring with a booming right. Still, Aguilar was not a stationary target, but up on his toes and punching down at the ever-forward champion. The rivals traded thunderous rights at mid-ring and, fighting on the inside, Chavez picked up a pencil-thin slice on his forehead when the challenger accidentally butted him. It would never be a factor in the outcome.

Judges Art Lurie and Patricia Jarman, both of Las Vegas, gave Aguilar the second round, but a more accurate appraisal of Rodolfo's handiwork came when Lurie and Lou Tabat, another Vegas veteran, awarded the import the third. Aguilar either missed or landed the heavier punches, including almost catching the referee just before the bell.

Chavez, making his fifth pro appearance in the famed oasis of chance, was such a strong favorite, Nevada's licensed oddsmakers had to settle on a proposition of the fight going or not going six full rounds—either way at 6-to-5.

The champion began making the "under" bettors happy in the fifth round. Aguilar appeared tentative with his tapping jabs, and Chavez tipped the beginning of the end when he buckled Aguilar's knees with a left-right to the jaw. Chavez had his tiring adversary wilting badly under a left and two rights just before the bell.

Aguilar came out of the torment with a slight cut over his left cheekbone, but the worst was yet to come. Chavez started quickly in the sixth round, anxious to prove his first venture with a lefthander was just another day at the office. Julio Cesar turned Rodolfo's head sideways with two left hooks before missing a left-right. The champion then delivered a mean left to the body and came up with a jolting right to the jaw. Chavez' punishment was unanswered at this juncture.

Aguilar was trying to back up when Chavez caught him with two rights, the second a clothesline shot that spun the contender sideways. Chavez had a right cocked, but held the punch when Aguilar seemed to topple slow-motion in sections, his mouthpiece rolling out of the ring.

Twisting to land face-down on the canvas, Aguilar, with eyes glazed, rose gallantly on instinct as Steele tolled "eight." However, Spada and his aides were on the ring apron, ready to come through the ropes if the referee hadn't wrapped his arms around the bewildered fighter for a TKO at 1:13 of the sixth round. Spada, who until recently had been handling Roberto Duran in the twilight of his once-brilliant career, admitted "Aguilar had taken enough punishment."

"Rodolfo is young, a top talent with a future, and there was no reason for him to get hurt," added Spada. "I was waving at Steele to stop it, and if he hadn't, I was going to jump into the ring."

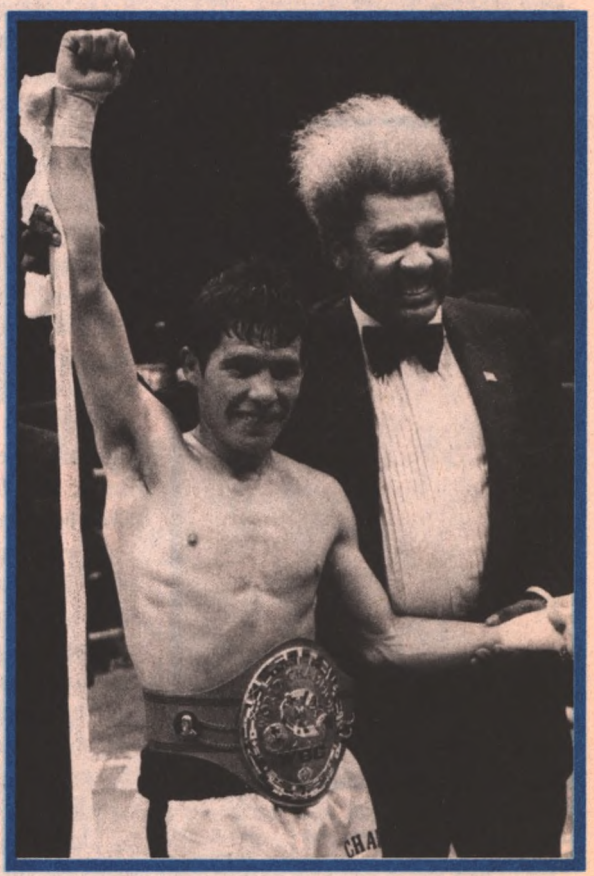
Fight aficionados were wrong if they thought Aguilar would be duck soup for Chavez. However, it was a bowl of fish soup that threatened to cause the champion some serious distress during the bout.

"I included the soup in my morning meal, and my stomach obviously didn't like it. My biggest worry was I might have an attack of diarrhea in the ring. I didn't start feeling bad until just before the fight, but that is not an excuse. Fortunately, nothing happened," Chavez said through interpreter Juan Sanchez.

Smiling and unmarked, Chavez sounded like a publicist for King in the postfight review: "Don King has great plans for me, and I'm happy to be with him. He gave me my first opportunity [winning the WBC super featherweight title in 1984] and a chance to be a champion in another division. I want to win four titles, and moving up to 140 pounds will be no problem."

Dandy Don was doing his shtick, and the Latin American journalists, in particular, appeared to be hanging on every word.

"Ah, yes ... Julio Cesar Chavez, one of the greatest of champions. I was watching Sugar Ray Leonard [part of HBO's broadcasting team] during the fight, and it was



Don King, Chavez' promoter, was in "Don King Mode" after the fight, joking that Chavez wanted to take on WBA welterweight king Marlon Starling next. In reality, Chavez' wish list was topped by Ramirez.

clear his fancy was titillated by Julio's performance. Leonard has been in training, and with mucho dinero to be made, Sugar Ray could come down to 147 because he's a natural welterweight."

Without losing a breath, King moved from the ridiculous to the more logical in outlining Chavez' future under the big man's direction.

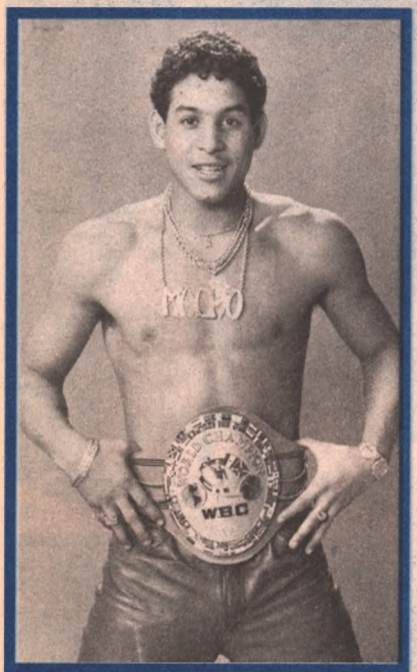
"Before anything, Chavez wants to unify the lightweight title, and that means Jose Luis Ramirez here in August," the promoter said. "We feel good about fighting at the Hilton. John Givenco [the Hilton's top executive] has pockets full of money, and he's willing to spend for premier attractions.

"I sat with Chavez to watch Marlon Starling keep his WBA welterweight title on a draw with Mark Breland, and immediately after the fight, Julio said, 'Get me Starling ... he's my size.'"

Chavez laughingly shook his head at King's declaration: "I will have to think more into this matter because it is a very big jump. I want to make big money, and if Don King gives me big money, I would even fight Mike Tyson."

Even before he had finished training for Aguilar, Chavez was talking to manager Cristobal Rosas about a showdown with Ramirez. Julio Cesar is no orphan, but Rosas looks upon him as a son. The night Chavez dethroned Rosario, there were tears in the squat little man's eyes. Rosas also had guided the late Salvador Sanchez to the WBC featherweight crown before the fighter's tragic death in an auto crash in August '82.

Five months before the Aguilar fight, Chavez dominated Edwin Rosario to win the WBA lightweight title. Chavez' manager, Cristobal Rosas, called his charge's performance in that fight "perfection."



When Chavez was the WBC super featherweight champion, Hector Camacho was a prime target. But Camacho proved not only adept at running around in the ring, but running outside of it as well, and the pair wouldn't meet until 1992 when both were junior welters.

"Watching Julio against Rosario, I got the same feeling I had the night Sanchez destroyed Wilfredo Gomez [August 21, 1981] in eight rounds at Caesars Palace. It was perfection," Rosas reported through translation.

Ten days before the first bell for Aguilar, the engaging champion told the media: "I'm fighting where the money is. Everybody in Mexico is talking about a fight with Ramirez. I'll consider moving up to 140, but that wouldn't happen until maybe November. First, I want to know I'm the best lightweight in the world.

"Some people say a fight with Ramirez may be worth $1- or $2-million. I don't talk about money because I might slip and say something smaller than the promoters have in mind."

Chavez, in the past, always seemed to sidestep conversation about meeting Ramirez, perhaps because they are countrymen and former stablemates in Mexico where Ramirez turned pro at 14 as a flyweight.

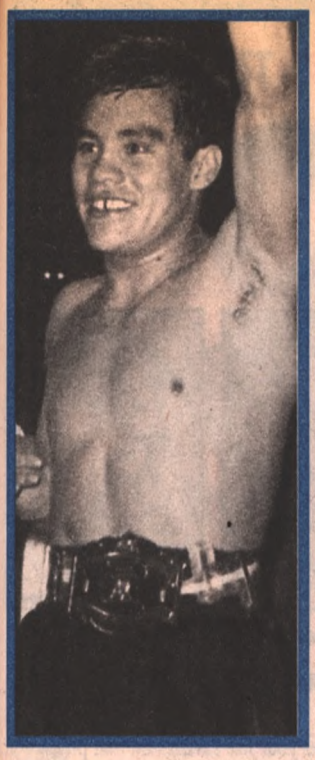
"When I was champion as a super featherweight, I was always chasing after Hector Camacho, but he wouldn't give me a chance. All my people wanted to see Camacho and Chavez. Now they're talking about me and Ramirez. We're in the same business, so in the ring as opponents, we fight. Outside the ring, we are still friends, regardless of the winner," Chavez said.

"Ramirez would be tough because of his great experience. Aguilar was tall and a southpaw, the first I ever fought. Ramirez is also lefthanded, but he's my size and he's slow. Jose will be no problem. I really have no preference who I fight, or where. Whoever the promoter tells me to fight, I'll fight as long as the money is right. Of course, from now on, I want big money."

Chavez earned $200,000 for taking out Aguilar, while the latter picked up $71,500, suffering his second loss and first kayo outside of Panama.

"Chavez is a great champion, very strong, the best in the division. He'll beat Ramirez," Aguilar admitted. "I didn't feel too bad on the first knockdown, but in the sixth round, I accepted them stopping the fight."

Chavez and his connections may be satisfied with two-thirds of the lightweight



Chavez' growing success put him in the same class as Ruben Olivares (left) and Salvador Sanchez (above), two all-time Mexican greats. Mexico paid homage to its new star, comparing him favorably to the legends of the past.

crown and then move on to the super lightweight division. Greg Haugen, the IBF's 135-pound ruler, apparently lost immediate consideration in the title sweepstakes when he received serious eye cuts retaining the title on a technical decision after being butted by Miguel Santana.

"I'd have no objection to meeting Haugen, but I don't think Don King would pay me the kind of money I'd want for that fight," Chavez explained.

Though gaining momentum as an international superstar, Chavez has deep family ties in Culiacan, where the population has soared from 358,000 to half a million since Rodolfo and Isabelita Chavez and their 10 children (Julio Cesar is the fourth born) arrived from Ciudad Obregon in the state of Sonora. Being a career brakeman on a railroad, Papa Chavez received a transfer order he couldn't refuse.

"I will always live in Culiacan, because my whole life has been down there. Besides I have a lot of girls down there," laughed the handsome fistfighter who is in his fifth year as husband of the former Alba Amalia Carrasco, 23, the mother of their two-year-old son, Julio Jr.

Considering his finely chiseled features seem more Anglo than Latin, Chavez is always amazed the way the populace of Culiacan, as well as the nation, pays homage, almost a daily ritual comparing him with legends of the past such as Olivares, Napoles, and Sanchez.

"Naturally, I'm grateful, but if they think I'm a hero, they should meet my father," Chavez informed. "You can go anywhere in Culiacan and ask people about Rodolfo Chavez. He won't talk about it, but my father has been a railroad man all his life. And a few years ago, he showed more courage than anybody I know when he helped pull a train load of explosives out of town just when they were ready to go off. Luckily, nobody was hurt. Now that's what I call a real hero." ■

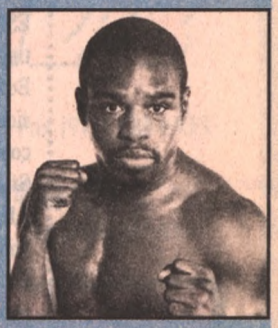
The Cover: "The Kid From Culiacan" was a hot commodity in the late-1980s. Julio Cesar Chavez had a handsome, boyish face, a very active style, and a Tyson-like invincibility every time he entered the ring. Already considered one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world, Chavez captured his 58th straight victory and 49th knockout as a pro over Aguilar.

Baring It All: How would Evander Holyfield, pictured defeating Carlos DeLeon, fare as a fighter in a bare-knuckles brawl using London Prize Ring Rules? THE RING speculated that Holyfield would be a good bare-knuckler, simply because "The Real Deal" was able to do almost anything at that stage of his career.

Beautiful Panama: THE RING took a visit to Panama, home of Roberto Duran and Eusebio Pedroza. Pedroza, a former world featherweight champion, greets one of his many fans at Maranon Gym, a legendary Panamanian spawning ground of champions.

Painful Verdicts: The split decision victory of WBC lightweight champ Jose Luis Ramirez over Pernell Whitaker in March 1988 left Lou Duva's mouth agape. Duva, known for wild histrionics, may have been justified after that shocking outcome.

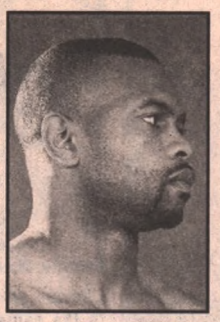
Fighter Of The Month: Considered on the downside of his career, Rocky Lockridge successfully defended the IBF junior lightweight crown with a unanimous decision over dangerous Harold "The Shadow" Knight. Knight rocked Lockridge in the 11th round, but in the end, Lockridge's over-and-under tactics proved to be the difference.



LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

JONES AND HOPKINS WILL SCRATCH SEVEN-YEAR ITCH



Jones-Hopkins II set for the fall

IBF middleweight champion **Bernard Hopkins** is something of a collector. He keeps memorabilia from his career, such as his first mouthguard and some of his old gloves and trunks. He acquires valuable items from the careers of other fighters, such as an old *Sports Illustrated* he recently found at a rummage sale featuring an article on Sugar Ray Robinson. And the latest addition to his collection is the May 2000 issue of *Boxing 2000*, a sister magazine of THE RING, featuring "The Executioner" on the cover.

"That magazine is going to be worth a lot," Hopkins said. "This fall, when I knock **Roy Jones** out, that magazine will be worth a lot of money."

Is Hopkins the man to knock Jones out? Most boxing experts would tell you not to bet your life savings on that prediction coming true. But Hopkins will get the chance to prove the pundits wrong sometime this fall at Madison Square Garden, when he gets the pay-per-view rematch he's been waiting seven years for. Back in May of '93, Jones and Hopkins met for the vacant IBF middleweight title. It was the first world title fight for both men, and after 12 somewhat tentative, unspectacular rounds, Jones came away with a unanimous decision. But when they meet again for Jones' undisputed light heavyweight title at a catchweight of 168 pounds, Hopkins insists the result will be different.

"I've waited seven years for this, and I'm bringing the attitude of a man who's been underpaid his whole career," said Hopkins, 36-2-1 (27) with 1 no-contest. "I know I got a lot more hunger than Roy. I ain't got no Rolls Royce parked in my driveway. Don't get me wrong, Roy paid some dues to get where he is, too. But I'm a much better fighter than I was seven years ago, and now is the time for Bernard Hopkins to establish himself as the man in boxing."

First, however, Hopkins and Jones both have one more hurdle to clear. On May 13, Jones, 41-1 (33), will meet WBA mandatory **Richard Hall**, while Hopkins takes on **Brian Barbosa**, a hard-punching, defensively sound contender, in the HBO co-feature. Hopkins recently inked a two-year, five-fight deal with HBO, a contract that can only become void if he loses to someone other than Jones. Hopkins, who says he'll probably come in at about 165 pounds, intends to keep the IBF 160-pound title regardless of what happens in the Jones fight and continue to pursue **Carlos Monzon's** record of 14 successful middleweight defenses (he currently has 10). So while he might not necessarily be defending the light heavyweight belts if he does pry them from Jones, they'll at least make for excellent additions to his memorabilia collection.

LISTEN UP

Holyfield: Should freeze Ruiz

Although nothing had been formally announced as of press time, it looks like the return of three-time heavyweight champion **Evander Holyfield** will happen on May 20, with the opponent being the highly rated (but not nearly as highly regarded) **John Ruiz**. The winner becomes the WBA's mandatory world title challenger ... There are some intriguing matchups coming to ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* in the weeks ahead. The best of the lot is the May 5 main event, pitting top middleweight contenders **Antwun Echols** and **Andrew Council** against one another. Both gave impressive performances in losing bids for world titles in '99, Echols dropping a decision to the outstanding Hopkins, while Council came up short against **Keith Holmes**. Other fights coming up on "The Deuce": **Dana Rosenblatt** vs. **Jimmy Crawford** and **John Brown** vs. **Gary St. Clair** on April 28; and possibly, on May 12, a battle between former world champions **Alejandro Gonzales** and **John-John Molina** ... New IBF junior welterweight champ **Zab Judah** will be making his first title defense in early-May on Showtime, possibly against **Terronn Millett** if the former champ's injured hand is healed by then ... Look for red-hot Brazilian junior lightweight **Acelino Freitas** to make his HBO debut in June. Possible opponents for Freitas, who sports a perfect 24-0 (24) record, include Molina and power-punching **Angel Vazquez**. ■

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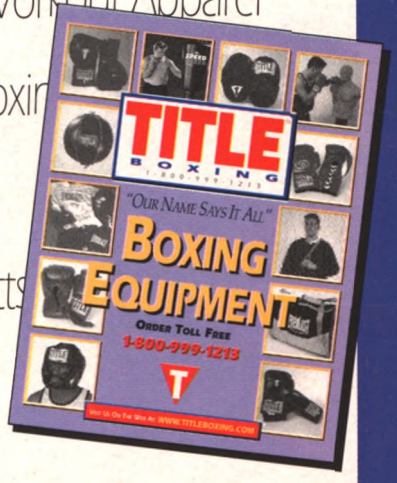

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